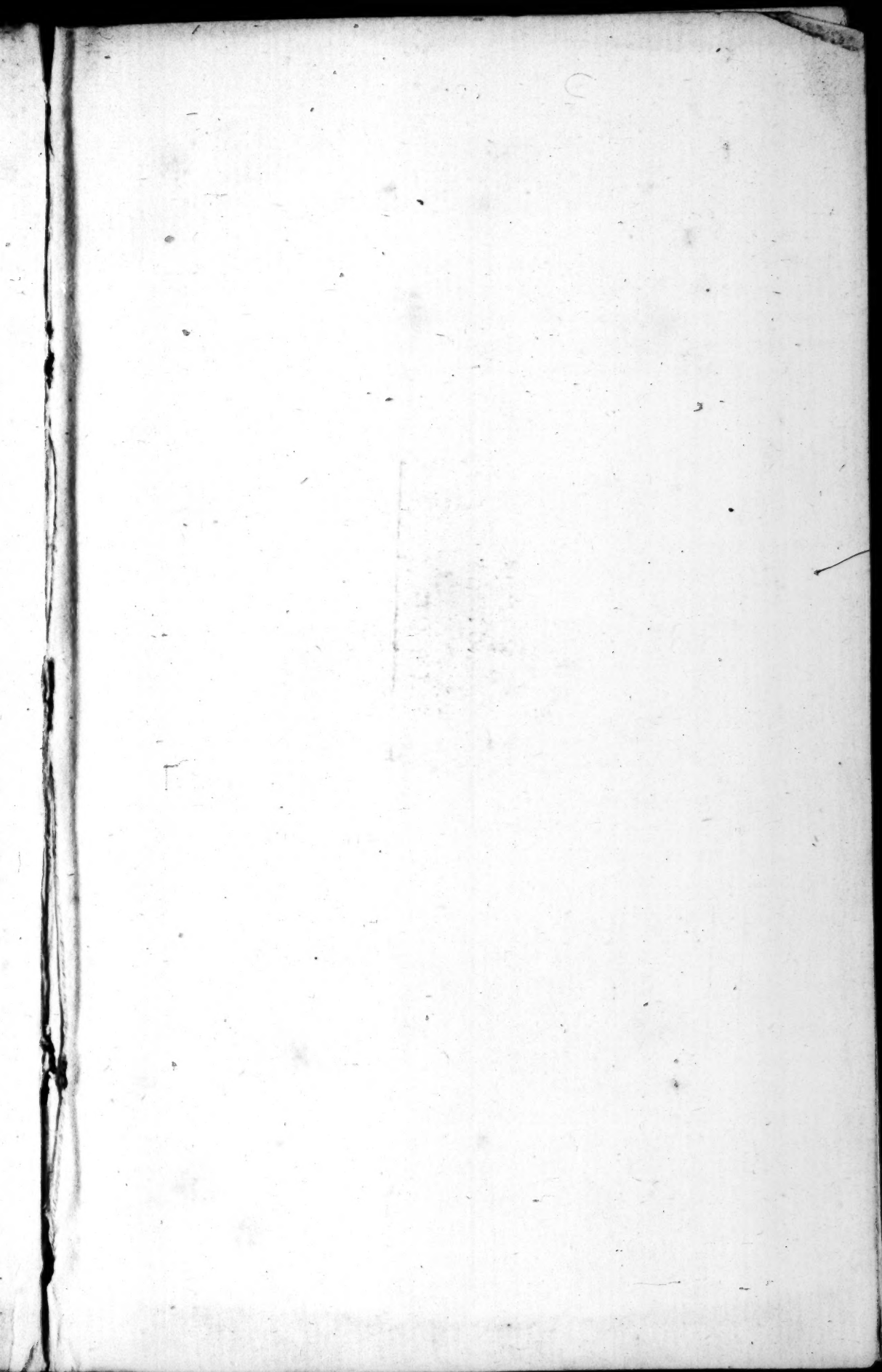




James Bonnell Esq^r



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ELLEN,

COUNTESS OF

CASTLE HOWEL.



ELLEN,
COUNTESS OF
CASTLE HOWEL,
A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MRS. BENNETT.

“Others make men, I only report them.” MONTAIGNE.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,
AT THE
Minerva-Press,
LEADENHALL-STREET.

M DCC XCIV.

ELLEN

COUNTRESS OF

CASTLE HOWELL

A NOVEL

IN FOUR VOLUMES

BY MRS. BENNETT



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IN DOCK LANE.

E L L E N,
COUNTESS OF CASTLE HOWEL,

CHAP. I.

DEAR PERCIVAL,

“ I DARE say, *you* remember as well as
“ me, the last time I saw you, when we
“ were walking round our little garden, I
“ promised not to marry without you approved
“ it. I suppose you will think it very for-
“ ward in me to talk of such things, but you
“ know I was just turned of fifteen *then*, and
“ I am *now* seventeen, which makes a differ-
VOL. II. B “ ence,

“ence, tho’ still I think it a very foolish sub-
“ject for *me*, but here (I am almost ashamed
“to tell you) that Lord Castle Howel, who
“you know I dearly loved, wishes——I de-
“clare I am glad I am writing instead of
“speaking to you, for my cheeks burn like
“fire, and I am sure I hardly know what I
“write, but any thing is better than breaking
“ones word. Oh, Percival, we have had sad
“doings, what would you say, to see my poor
“grandpapa and grandmamma, and my uncle
“and aunts, and all of us turned out of Code
“Gwyn, and crammed into the Parsonage?
“poor old Griffiths and Susan cried themselves
“almost blind, for what you know could they
“do? And the old Harper must have gone
“to the parish, and that, as he says, would be
“a sad thing, for a man who had laced
“cloaths, and played before my grandpapa’s
“father, when he was knight of the shire, then
“there is the old Bailiff—but indeed none of
“these would be so bad off, as my grandpapa
“himself, for you know he loves a large
“room, where his chair can travel as he calls it,
and

“and the largest room in the parsonage will
“hardly hold us all to dine when he is not
“there, and as to the poor dogs, there is no
“kennel for them either, and my grandpapa
“could not part with Bruin and Whitefoot;
“as to me, I have not minded dogs since
“Lord Claverton killed Lion, which you
“know you gave me when he was very little,
“and I was little too indeed. Well Percival,
“but I dare say you are shocked as well as
“me at the idea of my marrying, and yet
“Lord Castle Howel has behaved so kind
“to us all, and taken our estate out of the
“power of Mr. Morgan, who is turned out
“a very bad sort of a man, that I think you
“would rather I married *him*, than any body
“*else*; I wish he could marry one of my aunts,
“I’m sure he would be very happy, and you
“must know I have refused him, but he is
“so good, and so ill, and tho’ my uncle
“Meredith who oftener visits him, than any
“of the family, wont say it—yet I know they
“think he would be well and happy if I *re-*
“*lented*, that’s an odd word you will think, but

" 'tis my aunt Catherine's, who is always using
" odd words. Now dear Percival, I should
" break my heart if Lord Castle Howel died,
" but I would not save *his* life, by breaking my
" promise to *you*, so pray answer me by return
" of Post, and whatever becomes of Ellen
" Meredith, she will always esteem and love
" Percival Evelyn, and with those happy days
" they spent together, had not so soon been
" over. Oh, Percival, our garden is in beau-
" tiful order, I walk there till I am low spirit-
" ed, and always leave it in tears, but dear
" Percival advise me, tell me if you give
" me up my promise."

ELLEN MEREDITH.

After hastily folding and sealing this letter, she recollected that she neither knew his address, nor how to get it to the next Post town unknown to the family, Winifred was the only resource in such an exigence, she was directed to get Evelyn's address from David, and as Winifred was rather hardened

as

as to consequences, vowed she would carry it to the post-office herself, "if it rained cats and togs, cot forgive her for saying so."—

Accordingly, away went Winifred to the Parsonage, and sure of David in any thing concerning Evelyn, desired him to direct the letter.

Since Winifred's disgrace, and the cause of it was known she became a person of much less consequence among the domestics of Code Gwyn and the Parsonage, David was sulky; how did he know but 'twas a trick to write to her London fellow, to carry Miss Ellen off.

Winifred was on the point of breaking out, but recollecting she should be betrayed to the family, called in her old auxiliary, *tears*, wondered how he could use an old friend so, asked if he thought Mr. Evelyn would be concerned in carrying off Miss Ellen? "No to be sure," was the surly answer, and

he took the pencil she offered and scrawled the direction.—

Poor Winifred's evil planet reigned; Mr. Meredith, from the study window, saw her trip over the field to the back wicket of the garden, she had at that period the misfortune to stand very low in his opinion, and, altho' knowing the integrity of David, he could not guess how he should be made a party in her treachery, yet he had no doubt but the letter he saw in her hand was one, designed for Lord Claverton's footman, and darting round, met her as she was coming out of the garden. Never was poor waiting damsel in such a fright, she had not power to hide the letter, but stood trembling with it in her hand, positively denying she had such a thing about her, till exasperated at her falsehood, he snatched it from her, but his astonishment and confusion nearly equalled hers, when instead of Joseph, he saw it addressed to Percival Evelyn.

“ And

"And who wrote this letter?" said he in a voice of rage.

"Cot Almighty knows, sir" answered Win, "for I am sure I never saw it in my porn days; tivel take me, but I believe 'tis all witchery."

"Hold thy lying tongue," cried Mr. Meredith, and calling to David and his maid, charged them to keep her prisoner, till his return from Code Gwyn whether he directly rode.—Ellen was walking in her beloved garden, and he was so lucky as to find his father and mother alone, his face was so clear an index of his mind that Lady Meredith saw something extraordinary had happened, before he produced the letter.

"Ah poor Ellen" exclaimed Lady Meredith, shewing the direction to Sir Arthur.

Mr. Meredith looked more surprised.

"Shall we open it" continued Lady Meredith.

"Certainly" answered her Son.

Sir Arthur examined the impression, it was a fine *Hope*, an appendage to the watch Lord Claverton had given her; his looks did not entirely approve of breaking the seal.

"It is justified, sir, by our regard to the honor of our family, and affection for this lovely branch of it; it is indeed necessary, for how are we sure, that poor ignorant creature, Winifred, is not, even in this measure, the dupe of some plan of Lord Claverton, whose libertine designs"—Mr. Meredith's colour rose as he spoke.

Lady Meredith broke the seal herself, at the same time assuring her son she had in *this* instance, no suspicion of Lord Claverton. When the letter was read, Sir Arthur folding his hands turned to his lady,

"What pity!" said he.

Lady

Lady Meredith did not answer.

“I did not suspect this” said her son, “but I am confident the letter may be sent to Percival”

“Oh, no ! poor lad,” answered Lady Meredith, “it is too much.”

“I am confident it may,” repeated Mr. Meredith, and he was justified in the assertion, by his thorough knowledge of the youth, whose mind he had formed to the practice of every social virtue ; he persisted in advising the letter to be sent, positively affirming from what he knew of his Elève’s disposition, that his answer would promote the object of their wish, more than all they could do.

Lady Meredith had not quite so much faith in the self denial of a young man of twenty-one, but she no longer opposed the

B 5 trial ;

trial; Mr. Meredith returned with the letter to the Parsonage, and in the presence of Winifred sent his servant with it to the post town, telling her coldly, that when he took it from her, he suspected it was for her friend Joseph; but as it was for Mr. Evelyn, he had no business with it; he added, she need not say any thing to Ellen, and offered her half a crown. There were but two ways of bribing Winifred, one was a secret in the possession of Joseph Wilks, the other in that of Percival Evelyn; she put the half crown scornfully on the table.

“Not tell my mistress, but, as Cot shall save me I will, if I lose my life for it.”

Mr. Meredith smiled at the pert toss of her head, as she left the Parsonage,—but after all, and when she had made the very most of the story, Ellen was neither surprised nor alarmed, indeed she had wished, she said, (she knew not why) to conceal it from the family; but that was foolish, for as his answer

swer must come by post to Code Gwyn, it could not be kept secret, but none of these reasons, which she explained to Winifred, could satisfy *her*, she protested against the behaviour of the Reverend, and vowed the house was, "Cot pless her, no better as a prison."

A tedious eight days passed before Percival's answer arrived. In that interval Lord Castle Howel had been thought in some danger from a low fever, the old ladies (alarmed at his situation, and provoked at the assurance of a little country Miss's refusing the offered hand of the Earl of Castle Howel,) were constantly urging a fresh choice, and teasing both him and themselves by their impatience to return to London, where each of them had pointed out, among their acquaintance, young brides in abundance, whose mothers, aunts, and cousins, were remarkable for the number of children they brought into this wicked world; to these arrangements Lord Castle Howel turn-

ed a listless ear, his choice had been made, with too much real feeling, to be soon transferred, and he was convinced, by the pain her rejection inflicted on him, that the early impression Ellen had made on his mind, was as much the result of passion as philanthropy; he dwelt on her perfections, the joy which darted from her eyes, when she saw him at the Parsonage, the confidence with which she disclosed her sorrows, and asked his assistance, was ever before him, not having then received Mr. Meredith's letter, he was transported to receive so many proofs of affection from her, and the disappointment was from that circumstance more bitter, the agitation of his mind increased by the old Maderia, of which he had drank several bumpers, without recollecting it was a liquor, he had not accustomed himself to, at an hour he usually idled away at the tea table, threw him into a fever, but he was now recovering his health, tho' with a languor on his spirits, that was very distressing to the two spinsters.

On

On the eighth day the expected letter arrived at Code Gwyn, Winifred was on the look out, tho' not, as she flattered herself, unobserved, for as the connexions of the family at the mansion, with the great world were very circumscribed; what few letters came, were left at the Parsonage, but *this* Mr. Meredith chose should go to the house by the Postman.

Ellen was reading "Zadig" to Sir Arthur and Lady Meredith, and the two aunts were sitting at work, when Winifred entered, pretending to look for something; it was post day, Ellen understood Percival's answer was come. Oh! what did that answer contain? her voice faltered, her colour went and came, she trembled—Zadig dropped on the floor.——

Mr. Meredith, as if by accident, came in, and in his usual expressive face Lady Meredith saw the intelligence just convey'd by Winifred.

"What's

"What's the matter with Ellen," demanded he, "is she not well?"

"No —yes, not quite, I—

"Are you fatigued with reading?" my dear, said Sir Arthur.

"A little, I believe."

Lady Meredith advised a walk in the air, Ellen gladly rose and ran up stairs.

Winifred followed, threw the letter on the table, and vanished.—

Ellen locked her door, and took up the letter—she knew the hand—her eyes filled—she trembled and laid it down again—after a shower of tears, again she took up the important letter—but wanting resolution to open it, again it was laid on the table—she walked to the window—her heart beat violently—she traversed the room; and became more composed—again the letter was resumed—she examined the seal—it was a plain

plain cypher of E—"dear Evelyn" whispered she, and pressed it to her lips—she carefully tore the paper round the seal and opened the letter—its contents were short. She read,

"What advice can poor Percival Evelyn,
"the child of bounty, the object of charity,
"give his adored Ellen Meredith, your promise
"Ellen is no more—I give it up—you
"are free—let your heart be your monitor,
"but whatever your situation or mine may in
"future be, remember, while I have life, you
"have one sure unchangeable friend, who will
"rejoice in your prosperity, and on whose
"poor all, both of soul and power, you may in
"adversity depend."

"P. E."

An agony of tears succeeded the reading of this letter, and it would be hard to say, whether she was pleased or displeased at its contents—he had given back a promise, she considered as the only obstacle to her rendering

dering her own and the Castle Howel family happy—but she did not feel more happy *herself* for this enfranchisement, she wept over her liberty, and grieved that she had asked it,—dinner was announced—she could not eat, and begged to be excused going down—her request was complied with, Mr. Meredith guessed rightly the purport of the letter, and it was judged delicate and proper to submit to herself, the manner in which she would bear the first disappointment of her heart.—

Tea time came, Ellen was still in her room—a carriage drove up—she heard it, and all over nerve, ran trembling to the window, Lady Margaret alighted.

“My fate is determined” said she bursting into a fresh flood of tears. Lady Meredith knocked at the door “Lady Margaret Howel my dear is come to take leave of you, and has brought you a number of fine things, how is your head? will you come down?”

Ellen

Ellen accepted her offered hand, and looking up met Lady Meredith's eye, so humid, so compassionate, so tender, she threw her arms round her neck and could only sob.

"My Mamma, my dear, my only Mother, pity your poor Ellen;" "Pity!" replied the venerable matron, "I admire, I almost envy my child."

Ellen pointed to the letter.

"Do you mean, I should read that letter my child?"

"Not now, but take it with you, and never let me see it again."

"My heroic child," said the fond parent embracing her.—

Encouraged by the sweet voice of maternal approbation, and self assured, by the consciousness of a sacrifice so dear, a modest blush

blush suffusing her cheek, she followed her respectable relation into the parlour.

Lady Margaret saluted her, with rather a constrained politeness, and answered her anxious enquiries after the Earl, with a cold and formal bow; her brother she said requested Miss Meredith would do him the honor to accept a few trifling remembrances he had brought to Castle Howel for her; these trifles were a profusion of fine laces, muslins, and other elegant materials for female dress. The Miss Merediths, could not help admiring them article by article, but as Ellen sat lost in thought, Lady Margaret continued, -- The Earl "lamented he could not take a personal leave of the family, Sir Arthur will tell you Miss, how much my brother is your friend; he regrets he is *only* your friend."

Ellen was still silent.

Mr. Meredith hoped the neighbourhood were not going to lose them immediately.

The Ladies, Gertrude and Frances, would not, she answered, perhaps ever see Wales again, and they were naturally desirous of visiting some very old friends, this was probably the only unengaged day, and she had taken it to pay a farewell visit at Code Gwyn.

The family were properly sensible of the honor, but Ellen was still silent.

Lady Margaret took one dish of tea, made her exit with a few fashionable courtesys, and was handed to her carriage by Mr. Meredith, who stood some time looking after the chariot, in a reverie, from which he was roused, by an invitation to walk with Ellen, she led to her little Garden, where with swimming eyes, and plaintive voice she pointed to his notice, the beautiful shrubs, and flowers, the cypher and every ornament, love had contrived to adorn it: without seeming to observe the effect the fond reverie had on her mind, he liberally praised both
the

the plan, and cultivation of the charming spot; they had now walked round, and returned to the entrance, Ellen looked alternately at her uncle, and at the garden, she put her spread hand before her eyes, but the trickling tears would not be concealed, she hastily quitted the garden, and locking the little wicket, requested he would give the key to Evelyn.

Mr. Meredith took the key in an attentive silence, and accompanied her back to the house; as she turned to the stairs, he kissed his hand, and motioned towards the Parlour, she stop'd, he saw her heart was struggling with itself, "have you done with me my dear Ellen?" said he in a voice of sympathy.

After a moment's hesitation,

"No sir," she replied, "If you have patience."—He instantly followed into the gallery, where with a graceful modesty she opened her

her

her heart; confessed that from the moment she knew she had affections, they were placed on Percival Evelyn, told him of her promise, her letter, and his answer; lamented Lord Castle Howel had made a choice so unworthy of him, that he had not continued her friend, and protector, "but what" added she in an elevated tone and gesture, "what is the whole life of such an insignificant as me, compared to one hour of so good a man as Lord Castle Howel, of my dear venerable parents, of my aunts, and of you my dear worthy uncle; you who are the orphan's friend, and the father of the fatherless, from this moment I devote all my little faculties to gratitude and to duty,—you will still love Percival and advise him to his good.—If the Earl will accept me, and if you my dear uncle will tell him, I have *now* no will but his."—She stopped and paused.

Mr. Meredith looked at her with pleasure and admiration, but not with surprise, her conduct was exactly what he expected
would

would be the result of her letter to Percival, but though it was of more importance than he chose himself to think on, he forebore to commend, or even answer, what she had said; and only seriously replied, he was at her devotion, and would say or do whatever she wished.——

“Then I believe, sir, I believe I have said enough for Lord Castle Howel, but do you, my uncle, my friend, excuse me to the dear assembly in the Parlour, say every thing for me; but I, indeed I cannot see them to night.” Mr. Meredith embraced and left her.——

The pleasure this communication gave the Code Gwyn family may be conceived; besides making their situation happy, Ellen, the pride, the darling of their hearts, would be secured from distress, and an earnest of the same security to themselves; she would be a Countess! and the charms of mind, and person, which so delighted *them*, could not fail

fail of exciting general esteem ; Lady Meredith cautioned her family, not to shew an excess of joy, " we must," said the considerate parent, " respect the sacrifice, tho' we rejoice it is made."

Mr. Meredith executed his welcome commission, with delicate propriety. The Earl embraced him with warmth, and put a diamond of value on his finger,---Lady Gertrude took a pair of gold buckles, out of her own shoes, which had been her father's, and insisted on his wearing them. Lady Frances had a locket set with brilliants, in which was a lock of beautiful auburn hair, which she said was cut from her own head, a *very few* years back, he must take that for *her* sake.---Lady Margaret contented herself, with bestowing on him many *precious words*, the projected visits were given up, the coach ordered, and the Ladies returned with Mr. Meredith to visit their destined relation.

Nothing

Nothing could be kinder than the Ladies, nothing more engaging than the fair Ellen, an immediate return of the visit was pressed by Lady Margaret, in consideration of the Earl's health, and the blushing Ellen consented to be of the party.

The next day, Lord Castle Howel had the happiness to receive his young bride elect, at his Castle; and that day month was blessed with her hand at Code Gwyn church, every house of entertainment within ten miles of Castle Howel, and Code Gwyn, were open'd on the joyful occasion. The two spinsters vied with each other in brilliant presents to the bride, in honor to their family, and in private benefactions to the poor, in honor to themselves.

This splendid wedding, of which Winifred had not the smallest expectation, almost turned her brain, not that Ellen's advance in rank, or riches, was a matter of any wonder, for nothing in this world, or indeed in the
next,

next, could, in her opinion, equal the deserts of the mistress she perfectly adored; but, as Ellen was too much attached to her old favourite, to exchange her, notwithstanding her want of skill in the mysteries of the toilette, for a very clever young person, who was an adept,---the consequence and advantages, she derived from her situation, were more than the equilibrium of her little mind could well bear.

The Earl, charmed with every movement of a heart, where innocence and honor so entirely presided; was also partial to the oddities of Winifred; he insisted on her being retained, with the more regular lady's maid, and that *she* should have the pre-eminence.——

Sir Arthur Meredith, now at ease in his circumstances, his beloved grand-daughter, so happily established, his Lady happy and gratified, felt himself renovated. The ladies dressed better, the servants were again merry,

Mr. Jones, the apothecary, who had withdrawn his visits, when a certain fore-closure, was in agitation, now renewed his attendance at the Mansion, and Mr. Morgan's bow was more frequent, and lower than ever, tho' all intercourse with the family was declined on their part. As to the Castle Howels, they, as is usual with people of quality, who are at the top of happiness, wanted to be still happier. The old Ladies had not been many years from home, and now the object of their journey was in part obtained, they wished to accompany the young Countess to London; to go to court, see the public places, and visit their old friends. Lady Margaret had wishes too, but though not exactly the same as her aunts, yet as they ultimately pointed London-ward, she chose to echo them.

Lady Castle Howel, whose lively disposition we have before mentioned, found elegance, affluence, rank and all the luxurious appendages sit vastly easy on her. She heard

too much of the metropolis, and all its fascinations to object going there; besides, the Ladies who were perfect mistresses of etiquette, insisted her presentation at court was an indispensable ceremony, attached to her rank; and the Earl was too proud of his charming bride, and too much gratified by the admiration she excited, to wish to hide her in the mountains of Wales; a grand retinue was therefore ordered, and the day fixed for their departure.

But, although Ellen was now every inch a Countess, she had not forgot her duty and love, for the dear circle at Code Gwyn; she asked the Earl's permission to take her maid and spend one day with them, previous to her departure.——

It was bleak December, the days short, and unpleasant, and the road bad; the Earl existed but in the sight of his beautiful wife, but her gratification was dearer to him than his own—he advised her to stay

the night, with her beloved relations—the family he observed were so worthily united, they would have a thousand little nothings to say, which a stranger would restrain; “enjoy your good friends, my Ellen, visit the scenes dear to your infant affection, speak kindly to your old domestics, assure your venerable parents, I consider them as mine, and will receive you a second time from them myself, to-morrow.”

The Countess felt the kindness of this plan, and charmed her Lord, by her sensible acknowledgments.—The Code Gwyn family were apprized of her visit, and an universal holiday prevailed; Mr. Meredith dined, but would not sleep at Code Gwyn; the Countess remonstrated, “the night was dark and cold, and it was the last she should pass there”—he was not to be prevailed on, but said, he would be ready for his breakfast next morning, before she left her room.—

When Winifred attended to undress her, she was remarkably silent, and on being in-

terrogated by her Lady, as to the *cause*, protested, that "she believed, the tivel had always something to do at Code Gwyn;" I desire, my Lady, you will ax me no questions, for as cot shall judge me, if I speak, they will cill me, and if I don't, I shall purst"—"Well," replied the Countess, "I want to know none of your secrets, I [suppose you have heard from your old sweetheart."

"Ay, Ay, well, well, cot pless, and save old sweet hearts, I say, amen, amen, pray cot—name o cot, I am not afraid of apparations, if people will preak their hearts, and tie, other people can't help it, cot forgive us all—our sins, and our iniquities."——

"You are very pious to night, Winifred."

"No, cot help me, I must not speak, put if I was to tell your Ladyship."——

"I won't hear another word," said the Countess, sportively.

Winifred sighed, and went away praying to cot, to forgive her sins.

The Earl was at Code Gwyn by two, and on account of the short days, declined staying dinner; they departed amid the tears, and benedictions of the family, and servants, the former from affection, the latter, partly from regard to their young mistress, and partly from the generosity of the Earl.—

The day was clear, and light, Ellen prattled away; the Earl “conversing with her, “forgot all time, all seasons, and their “change;” he was contemplating with delight the flattering change in her lovely countenance, which tho’ deluged with tears, at parting with her friends, was already restored to its usual serenity, when a scream, and exclamation from Winifred, who sat at the back of the coach, called all Ellen’s blood into her face, and turned him pale.

“Cot have mercy on us, pray cot, and
forgive

forgive our transgressions, avaunt satan please
cot."

They were passing the Parsonage, it stood on the top of a steep hill, the weather had been frosty, and the drivers were obliged to slacken their pace; Ellen bended forward, and saw the object that excited Winifred's exclamation.

Percival Evelyn, or rather the pale emaciated shadow, of what he *was*, stood at a chamber window, supported by David, watching with eager eyes the passing vehicle.

The Earl, extremely displeased, and attributing the agitation visible in Ellen, to Winifred's exclamation, asked sternly if she had seen a ghost.—

Certain recollections, at this moment particularly troublesome to poor Winifred, and a natural fear of ghosts, and hobgoblins, having heard that Mr. Evelyn was actually dying, levelled all distinction.

“Cot forgive you my Lort, for using such pad worts, and plast femys, but cot is abof the tivel still, and cot knows, what is a lort before satan, any more then a poor finner, for costs to be shure if they wan’t to be tied in the red sea, may tear a lort to pieces with crace of cot.”

The wench is mad! exclaimed the Earl. The Countess had by this time recovered her surprise, the sight of Percival, at such a period, and in such a situation, so unthought of, and so unexpected, could not fail to agitate her; but a moment’s recollection convinced her of, the impropriety of shewing the concern she felt for another man, in her husband’s presence; that she *did feel it*—was an injury to her own peace, but to betray it, would be an insult to his honor—every soothing word from the Earl, was a reproach to her heart, and she had the heroism to make a secret vow, in that moment, never to mention, or hear mentioned, the name of Percival Evelyn; yet, not even the consciousness of

of acting right, could recompose her spirits, and she retired to her chamber, as soon as she alighted at Castle Howel.

Winifred was bursting to speak of Evelyn, "Oh, my Lady!" cried she, "did you see the poor tear dying Mr. Evelyn? who"—she was struck dumb with astonishment, when Ellen commanded her, on pain of utter displeasure, to avoid ever mentioning a name, *once so dear.*—

"Cot be coot unto us, poor sinful par-gury souls, what, not when he ties? as he certainly will, must not I speak, when he is dead and cone, in the peaceful crave, and his cost comes in a whirlwind, like a roaring lion?"

Living or dead, I will not hear him mentioned, answered Ellen, much agitated.

Winifred had patched up a kind of truce with her conscience, by resolving to make a confession, of some *secret* sins to her Lady, in which Mr. Evelyn's name *must* occur,

but Ellen's determined manner, deprived the poor penitent of this consolation, and she left her in such terror of mind, that she actually gave the dairy maid two yards of ribbon, *almost as good as new*, to sit up with her all night, and it was not till she left Castle Howel she fancied herself safe.

The next morning the Castle Howel family, set out for the metropolis.—The news papers had announced the marriage of “*the right honorable the Earl of Castle Howel, to the beautiful Miss Ellen Meredith,*” and the curiosity of the beau monde was in consequence excited; their arrival at Bath, where Ellen wished to see her governess, and old school fellows, was proclaimed by the usual music, ringing of bells, &c. and Mrs. Forrest and her ladies, were very early in their respects.

At the sight of Mrs. Forrest, Winifred Griffith, whose head had been in a constant vortex of new cloaths, fine fighs, and
dignity

dignity of station, so infinitely superior to any thing she had ever seen, or expected; remembered there was such a man in existence, as Joseph Wilks, whose kind letter, (which brought her into such disgrace at Code Gwyn,) yet remained unanswered, and that in the aforesaid letter, certain things were alledged as coming from Mrs. Forrest, at which she had taken great offence; she also remembered, that during Miss Meredith's residence at Bath, she was forbid to attend on her;—but times were changed, she had now the honor to be first woman to a Countess, one, who from the superior gifts of fortune and nature, seemed formed for the adoration of the multitude; and although poor Win had the ill luck, to be disliked by every soul in the family, but her Lady, on account of her uncouth language and manners which appeared vulgar, and her promptitude to speak whatever she thought, on all occasions, which appeared bold and assuming, yet, the Countess's protection gave her the highest degree of consequence, and Mrs.

Forrest's name was carried to her, as she sat lolling at the window, and sipping her coffee.

The aforesaid recollection, tempted Winifred to give herself a few airs; but the respect she knew the Countess had for her late governess luckily restrained her; she was however resolved to exhibit her consequence, and at the same time gratify both her vanity and passion, (if what Joseph Wilks had inspired her with, might be so called) by learning some particulars of him.

Mrs. Forrest was therefore shewn to her apartment—and with the affability always attendant on good sense, and good breeding, was much pleased to see such a desirable change, in the circumstances of one, whom she had considered as a domestic of her own; she congratulated her, with such unaffected good nature, that all Winifred's projected *hauteur* was in an instant forgotten.

When

When Mrs. Forrest enquired of the Countess; Winifred, who really was a thorough good hearted creature; and proud, as well as fond of her lady, launched out into descriptions of her state, and grandeur, ostentatiously displayed all the paraphernalia then unpacked, and concluded by saying (what to her was really a wonder) that she was not the least altered, but better tempered than ever.

Mrs. Forrest smiling, said, she was much mistaken, if any change of circumstances would alter so sweet a disposition, her elevation did not surprise *her*, she was sure, Lady Castle Howel need only be seen, to be universally admired; for her part, she had always expected Lord Claverton would have been the man, and believed he was sincerely mortified, he had not made his proposals before Lord Castle Howel—the Countess, to be sure, could be no more than happy—but Lord Claverton, was such an elegant, polite bred man, and *younger* than Lord Castle Howel.—

Winifred

Winifred interrupted her, to ask, when she had seen Mr. Joseph?

“If you mean Lord Claverton’s valet, he brought me a card yesterday.”

Winifred coloured up to the ears, pleased to think she should so soon exhibit her state to Joseph, but her joy was of short duration: Mrs. Forrest informed her, Lord Claverton had been very much indisposed, that he had often done her the honor to call at her house, *before* his indisposition, and that his servant had brought her an apology, for his not making his bow, before he left Bath.

“Dear me! dear me! how sorry,” Winifred *said* she was for poor Lord Claverton, and how sorry, she *really* was, that Joseph had gone *without* her seeing him, or at least without *his* seeing *her*; but there was some comfort he was at London, where she also was going, and no doubt, her true lover would soon find her.

The

The moment Mrs. Forrest was announced, she was admitted, the Earl politely thanked her, for her care of his lady.

Ellen loved, and respected her governess, as every young lady will, who has the good fortune to be educated by accomplished women, whose own faultless example, illustrate their precepts; and she received her with open arms. breakfast was served in the Countess's apartment, but the Earl at her request joined his aunts and sister.

After exhausting chit chat enquires, Lady Castle Howel recollected Lord Claverton had been at Bath, and asked if he yet continued there; Mrs. Forrest had too proper a sense of the rule of right, to say a syllable more of him, than merely to answer the Countess's questions, which were, simply, when he came, and when he left Bath.

Mrs. Forrest's nice sense of virtue, and propriety was blended with an excess of good nature—Lord Claverton, in prosecution of his

darling scheme, had returned to Bath ;—An adept in every art of penetration, he found her weak side, if indeed it might be so called, and contrived to be so *unhappy*, so *inadvertent*, and so off, all kind of guard, when he found Ellen was removed, it was impossible for her to avoid the discovery he *intended* she should make, of his being *desperately in love*; and as he had so much honor on his tongue, and she so much in her heart, it was also impossible she could doubt, either the sincerity, or honor, of his professions; proud of the confidence of a nobleman of his rank, and pleased to look forward to the elevation of a young creature she loved, and whom by contributing to bring about a match of such consequence, she should serve and oblige—she became familiarized to the event, and spoke, without reserve, of Ellen to his Lordship, as he did of his passion to her.——

The sudden recall from school, was a matter of mutual surprise and conjecture; every possible cause, except the right, was canvassed,

canvassed, and Joseph desired to write to his true love for information; how *she* was engaged, the reader has seen, and as Mrs. Forrest thought his Lordship's health was affected, by the unaccountable mystery, that had attended Ellen's removal, she easily persuaded herself, he was an amiable unfortunate lover.—

Lord Castle Howel being in comparison of his Lady, and even of Lord Claverton, an old man; the match so suddenly concluded, the inadvertent enquiries from Lady Castle Howel, after a lover, so superior to her husband, in Mrs. Forrest's opinion, were corroborating that the attachment was, tho' unpropitious, *mutual*,—she took leave of her late pupil with sentiments of compassion, too strong to be confined to her own bosom; these she confided to a female friend, who had a friend, who had two friends, whose friends were dispersed, over the whole polite circles, then at Bath, the natural consequences of which were, that when
the

the Earl and his bride, with the ladies of their party, went to the rooms, in the evening—the merest Chit there, knew that Lady Castle Howel was a beautiful young girl, *forced* to marry an *old man*, when she was breaking her heart for a *younger one*. It is true, her Ladyship's look and manner, positively contradicted this, as never did peace and content, more visibly eradiate a human countenance,—but rumour's hundred tongues established the fact.

Thus in the full bloom of health, with a temper sweet and lively, a disposition to please, and be pleased, attached to her husband, by whom she was adored, fond of gaiety and splendour, of which she was in full possession; the sensible world chose she should be the most wretched creature living; the men swore, “it was pitiful, wond’rous pitiful,” she was a charming creature—and Claverton would have her in the end.—The women saw nothing in her, but a baby face, which would soon be spoild, by the quantity of
of

of paint she wore, and all the little world, then at Bath, was so good, as to be extremely agitated, about the fate of a young creature, who herself felt, and really was, one of the happiest women in existence; who laughed, danced and chatted away the hours, while Lady Gertrude, and Lady Frances, accompanied by their niece, were visiting beauties of the last century; and retracing men, and things, *now no more.*

CHAP. II.

THE week thus spent at Bath, was in fact, an entrée into the greater world, of London, for as every body visited the Castle Howels, and as these *every bodies* had *their* correspondents, to whom they sent their opinion and description, together with a full, and particular account of all the reports, true,

true, and untrue, in circulation respecting this phœnomena, in the world of beauty; and as besides, which the world is in possession of so many daily blessings, ycleped newspapers; before she reached the metropolis, Lady Castle Howel was better known to the haut ton, and every Coffee house, than to her most intimate friends.—

Meanwhile, Lord Claverton was confined to his house, a prey to ill health, ill humour, and unsuccessful passion. Joseph Wilks was still prime minister; not that Lord Claverton had an atom of regard for Joseph, or Joseph for his Lord; but as the one was not more apt in planning, than the other dexterous in executing, and as habit becomes second nature, there was a kind of compact, between master and man, which promised to be more lasting, than such compacts generally are.—

Joseph, who was raised from a private in the guards, to his present honorable station; tho' very

very illiterate, had a great share of what is called mother's wit : he was taught his letters at a charity school, which he learnt to put together on the drum head ; as he was a great man's great man, before he could write, application supplied the place of instruction, and he was self learnt to scrawl such letters as we have seen in the course of this history ; he was a dashing fellow, and in no small degree a newspaper critic,—as the papers went through his hands, before they reached his Lord, he had it in his power to give the first information of every paragraph, that would amuse, or entertain him.

The moment his lordship's bell rung, Joseph appeared with the papers, and almost out of breath read the Bath news.—

“It is said a beautiful new made Countess
“fights in the arms of her old Lord, for the
“object of her first attachment, and it is
“whispered that Lord C——n left Bath, in
“delicate regard to the feelings of the new
“married pair.”

The

The spear of Ithuriel, when it detected Satan at the ear of Eve, had not a more instantaneous effect on the father of intrigue, than the paragraph had upon this his true son; and a letter from his friend Mrs. Elderton completed the business.

From the time Ellen was sent to Bath, he marked her for the sweet companion of those hours, his constitution would no longer permit him to devote to intemperance; his whole heart fixed on a design, in which he knew not of a competitor, he thought he had nothing to do but to watch the fine fruit, till an opportunity offered to gather it for his own table. The more secure he had been, the more vexatious his disappointment; but the Bath news renovated his hopes; as to Ellen's loving Lord Castle Howel, that was out of the question, and a thoughtless young woman, married to a man, she did *not* love, was a fair field for intrigue; whether partial to him, or not, no matter,—the world was taught to believe so, the scandalous chronicle had established the fact, and volumes

wrote

wrote on the subject could not do it away.—Self love indeed, was mortified in the consciousness, that the reports, as far as concerned him, were false, but that was by no means an argument, why they should always continue so.—Dr. Macsheat, still his medical attendant, and always his tool, retained his influence in Grosvenor-Street—and he himself, resolved to become a favourite of Lady Margaret's, which he well knew, thro' his friend the doctor, would be a very easy matter, and he instructed Joseph, to be more in love than ever, with Winifred, or whatever damsel might happen to attend Lady Castle Howel.

Meanwhile the unconscious Countess, was in raptures at every thing she saw; the towns, so superior to any thing she had passed thro' in Wales, the elegant accommodations on the road, the respect paid to their retinue, the grand and populous avenues to the metropolis, were all objects of wonder and of pleasure.

Lord

Lord Castle Howel's house appeared nothing extraordinary, perhaps, to those who had seen some of the superb edifices, which adorn the court end of the town; but it was spacious, convenient, and nobly furnished: Seddon never credited his taste more, than in the new decorations of the bride's apartments,—her dressing room, library, closet, and even powdering room, were more useful than showy, and yet more tasty than either: she looked delight, and gratitude, at her husband, when he gave her possession of them, and the next day, from habit of employing herself, was found very busy with Winifred, at the hour the knocker was in perpetual motion; but this was an error she was not likely to retain;—simplicity of dress, reading, music and work were soon obliged to give place to more fashionable avocations;—the house was thronged with visitors of all descriptions, she saw a vast number of pretty women, and agreeable men, who appeared as desirous to cultivate her friendship, as if their very beings had depended on her.—

When

When the ladies declared it was impossible to exist without dear Lady Castle Howel, and the men swore, life was no life, where she *was not*, could she be less than pleased? When women of the first fashion, were so anxious to fill up every moment of *their* time, encroaching, even on the hours allowed for meals, and rest, in dressing, public amusements, and gaming, the three grand pursuits of the superior women of the age; how was it possible *she* could be so stupid, as to prefer any of the obsolete amusements, which had filled a long summer's day, and winter's evening, in the mountains of Wales? had she been fortunate enough to have one *friend*, one adviser, not warped by affection, not partial in indulgence, she might perhaps have selected from the multitude, who crowded her parties, a circle, in whose society she might have escaped, the almost inevitable evils, which however well the polite world may please to be with themselves, are monsters of their own growth. But Ellen had no friends; she had only a

tender husband, affectionate relations, a profligate lover, and a numerous acquaintance.

The points of the compass could not differ more than the three ladies, who undertook to chaprone Ellen into life.

Lady Gertrude, and Lady Frances Howel, were toasts forty years before Ellen was in being ; they were born within an hour of each other, and tho' in the early part of their lives, when pleased with *themselves*, they were ready to dispense to others the smile that glowed from the heart, to the coral lip of beauty ; they were never even *then* remarkable for their sisterly attachment ; one sentiment only seemed to be mutual, and this one was the subject of their first animosity. Their cousin, a wild handsome young fellow of that age, famous for his infidelities among women, and his courage among men, laid a bet with some of his dissipated companions, that he would make love to his two cousins, one a starched prude, the other a
wild

wild coquette, and be successful with both ; he won his wager ; and what aggravated the injury done two young ladies of character, he was, at the same time, actually married to his mother's dairy-maid.

His mock addressers however were not so guarded, but the twin sisters were jealous of each other ; and indeed, nothing, but their mutual suspicions could have blinded them to the perfidy of their lover.—

The resentment of the then Lord Castle Howel, and his family, were justly levelled against Mr. Howel, but the *laugh* of the country was against the ladies, and so strong they persuaded their father to leave Wales, and live wholly in London, which he did for the remainder of his life ; but whether the story travelled with them, whether they were not *quite* so charming as they now described themselves to have been when young, or whether *experience* of the falsehood of *man*, steel-ed their hearts against their fascination, they

were now in the sixty-fifth year of their celibacy ; retaining, if not their virgin beauties, all the propensities that had formerly distinguished them ; perpetually jarring, contradicting, and reproaching each other, and agreeing in nothing, but their wish to disinherit their cousin, they had spent their long unsocial lives without love, and incapable of friendship.

Lady Gertrude (the prude) took on her to select a set of acquaintance for the young Countess, who might have sat for Hogarth's pictures, in the society of old maids ; consisting of widows, whose last hopes were buried with their husbands,—wives, whose faces and manners had effectually secured *them* from temptation, but whose tempers had suffered the severest trials, from the folly of their handsome acquaintance ; antiquated virgins, a few fretful old men, whose wit was out of fashion, and a few *as* fretful who wished to bring *theirs* in.—

“These

"These now, my dear," said she, "are people whose countenance will protect you from the nauseous adulation, men of this age pay to weak young women; you will meet none of the bucks, as they are called; none of the idle red and blue coats, that annoy people of superior ideas almost every where; no, what men you see there are sensible, rational beings, from whom you may acquire improvment, and receive instruction; keep to such characters, and your own will remain unimpeached."

"I dare say," replied Ellen, colouring extremely, "the ladies and gentlemen you mention, are very amiable; but I shall never think of having any other protector for *my* character, than my own innocence, and my Lord's honor."

"When you have been a certain time initiated into the society I have mentioned, you will think differently,—it is necessary in the great world, not only to *be* innocent, but to *seem* so."----

"*Be and seem !* indeed madam, I shall think any time very ill bestowed, that is devoted to the distinction---to me, it is exactly one thing."

"Well, Lady Autumn and her sister, Miss Pendegrass (both of whom I remember very handsome) and *are* very clever, have left their cards, and I will introduce you to their assembly ; you will be charmed with the decorum and solidity of their conversation, and I have too good an opinion of your understanding, to suppose you will not prefer *them*, to any other acquaintance you can make."

Ellen acquiesced with Lady Gertrude's sentiments, who left her fully satisfied, she would follow her advice.

"My sister has engaged you to a mighty stupid party, niece," said Lady Frances, with a youthful affectation of levity, "you will be bored to death ; I never could bear the assemblies of that Lady Autumn, tho' I suppose they are not now quite so insufferable,

as

as when poor Autumn was living; what a life did she lead that poor man one evening, merely for kissing my glove."

"Kissing your glove madam!"

"Gallantry child, mere gallantry; then the first hour after we were seated, while she made tea (ladies made their own tea then) I was very young, but I remember it extremely well, there were we hipped to death with her lamentable jealousy,—and as to Bab Pendegrass, if you happen to shew your white teeth before her, you are undone (Lady Frances's teeth were in tolerable preservation, which having displayed, she went on) first because her own (when she had any) were, I remember, (and I was quite an urchin) *black* as jet; and secondly, because Sir Solomon Spindle, who has been her dangler, off and on, these forty years, will be sure you mean it to him, and ogle you accordingly.

Lady Frances wore that day, a new clear muslin robe, trimmed with Pink, and monsieur (who was very famous for assisting nature) had so managed the dressing of her hair, that both in warmth and size, it supplied the want of a cap, and she was at this moment contemplating her figure before the glass, which *still*, in opposition to her sister, who was rather corpulent, retained a youthful slim appearance,—“take my advice, and I’ll introduce you into the pleasantest set of beings on earth: First, there’s Lady Daub, a woman of exquisite feelings, tho’ she has been obliged to disguise them a little on account of her Enamel—*there* I remember, I first saw the haughty, gallant, gay Lothario.”

“Lothario, Madam, pray who is that?”

“Why my dear that is Lord Merriot, that was—the dear duke of—that is—a nobleman, who has been in the practice of making love, long before I was born, and has still some new thing to do, and to say, to every
fine

fine woman he meets; if I had 'not made a vow never to marry."——

Ellen could keep her countenance no longer; the Earl had in their airing thro' Hyde Park, been stopped by this dear Duke, who certainly did say a vast number of *new*, surprising things in praise of *her* beauty, but who nevertheless had so provoked her risible faculties, she could not help offending against the laws of politeness, by bursting into a fit of laughter, which offence, to the astonishment of Lady Frances, she *now* repeated.

Now, be it known unto all pert, handsome, gigling young women, the most dangerous thing they can do, and the hardest to be forgiven, is to laugh at an old coquette, at a time when she is new dressed, before a glass, and well with herself.

Lady Frances's little grey eyes struck fire, she cast a contemptuous glance at our laughter, and left the room.——

Her look, and manner, frightened Ellen out of her mirth, and much disconcerted, she repeated to Lady Margaret the whole conversation.—

“ My aunts,” said Lady Margaret, “ have been so long immured, at their Castle in the north, they forget how times and fashions alter,—the people they talk of, are like themselves *out of date*—but if you do not accompany them in their visits, it will be a heinous offence, and you will meet many of the first people at Lady Daub’s. When once you have been presented, and the ancient Ladies gone, you wo’n’t mind company; your old friend Lord Claverton and Dr. Macsheat (who both dine with us to-day) when my Lord chuses to stay in his study, will make up our whist table, and attend us to the Opera; we may receive, and pay a few visits, but I wish this racketting life was over, I am weary of it, an hour with one agreeable friend is worth all the public places in town.”

The reader will perceive the change, *one* friend has made in Lady Margaret.

Her plan was worse than the old ladies, "shut up at whist with Doctor Macsheat, Lord Claverton, and Lady Margaret, monstrous !" Nothing was ever so pleasant to Ellen, as the racketting life Lady Margaret had very lately began to hate, and she secretly dissented from the whist proposition ; the entire confidence she placed in her Lord, made her long to tell him the conversation of the morning, but it was time to dress for dinner.—

This article of dressing was the only thing, she disliked in her new arrangements, her dishabille was elegant, and she was always, even at Code Gwyn, clean, why therefore her hair was to be deranged, after it was once put in order,—why one elegant dress, was to be changed for another, merely because it was dinner hour, she could not understand, and was provoked at such a waste of time, but

this error was also one that required a very short time to correct.—

The Earl led the Countess into the drawing room, a little while before dinner was announced, and presented the gentlemen both to her and his aunts.

Lord Claverton trembled; Doctor Macshean, who had not seen her, since they left her, the first time at Bath, could not help breaking out in a rapturous exclamation, when he saw the beautiful Romp of less than sixteen, now changed into a tall graceful woman, whose elegant figure, and fine proportioned limbs, seemed put together in the most perfect symetry, to set off a face as faultless, as at that instant, was her gentle heart; she had already acquired a taste and manner in dress, which more adorns a beautiful woman, than the most costly Jewels, and she derived from her excellent understanding, a confidence in herself that supported her rank.—The blush of modesty suffused her cheek, at first sight,
of

of any stranger, but the world will allow, a young lady entering into high life in London, is in a very fair way of getting over all faults of that kind.—

Doctor Macsnean, still adhered to a cautious humility of manners before the Earl, and nothing could be more respectfully attentive, to the Countess than Lord Claverton, he also contrived without any appearance of adulation, to make his politeness acceptable to the two spinsters, who both declared, he was the best bred man they had seen since they left the north; another instance of Lord Claverton's knowledge of the human heart, since he reconciled two such contradictions in his favour.

Parties were proposed, and engagements made for the opera, plays and masquerades, all which places Ellen longed to be at.

Lady Gertrude appealed to Lord Claverton, whether it was proper the bride should
be

be seen about, before she was presented.

Lord Claverton did not exactly know the sentiments of the rest of the family, and could not answer more positively than, "certainly, except indeed in certain cases."

"Certain cases," said Lady Frances, impatiently, "our cousin the Duchess is not in town, as she is the person of highest rank in the family, it is proper my niece should be presented by her, but sure there is no necessity for us to keep house till she arrives."

Lady Margaret saw no reason to hurry.

The Earl wished Ellen's opinion.

"Oh, don't ask me, for tho' I don't know what is right, I shall certainly give my vote for the opera and plays."

Lady Gertrude frowned, but as a favourite singer was announced for that night, with
such

such champions to support her, Lady Castle Howel ventured to make her party, from which her ladyship did not however chuse to be excluded.

Lord Claverton had the honor to hand the bride, the Earl took care of his aunts, and Doctor Macsheat had the felicity to press the fair hand of Lady Margaret.

Out came the glasses---neither sex, are in this polished age, so vulgar as to see with the naked eye.

The men having examined every feature, with but one opinion of her beauty, formed many of her appearance, and attendants; that Lord Claverton was a happy dog, and that Lord Castle Howel was an old fool, were settled points.

“What an old stupid fellow! to let his wife’s lover be on such familiar terms in his family,” cried an emaciated young nobleman, whose
lady

lady had recently eloped with her footman :
“very good,” answered Sir Harry Whiffle,
“how would you have him avoid it, if the
Lady is resolved?”

“In that case to be sure,” joined a red faced
Counsellor, “he has no resource but West-
minster-hall.”

“Oh, damn it !” said General Spindle, “he
deserves it for marrying—what can a man ex-
pect, who parts with his liberty ? I dare say
she might have been had on easier terms.”

General Spindle, was one of these generous
creatures, who always kept one pretty
woman, or another, in great style, pro bono
publico, he was duped, bullied, and laugh-
ed at, by half the celebrated courtezans of the
age, but what of that, he had not parted
with his *liberty* !

The Ladies were divided in their opinion
of her beauty, some thought her too tall,
others

others not tall enough ; with some she was too much in the *em bon point*, with others too thin ; one thought her handsome, but lamented she wanted animation, others thought she affected intelligence of countenance, but was not at all pretty ; they all however agreed, she was very bold, to make her first *entrée* into public with a favored lover—they were sure she was very imprudent, but would invite her to their parties nevertheless.—

Ellen, in the mean while, fancied herself in a land of enchantment, and her unfashionable attention to the music disgraced her still more than her imprudence ; the first opera was the most delightful thing in nature, except the second, the third was still more charming ; and so, having been presented, under a load of family jewels ; the Queen having admired, and the King saluted her—there was no longer an objection to her seeing every place, and every thing ; and to do her justice, no young Lady
of

of fashion ever made a more liberal use of the bon ton parole ; her morning levees were crowded with fashionable milliners and mantua-makers, all of whom had some exquisite thing, just imported, or invented, which no Lady but herself was to see, to whose civility she was too much obliged, not to give an order ; every half hour teemed with petitions from distressed families, or verses from indigent poets ; every day produced a fresh list of engagements, and every visit an addition to her acquaintance.

Lady Gertrude reminded her, of Lady Autumn's assembly, where she found the company very fine, very solemn, and very stupid, till cards a little inspired them ; she cut into a whist party, a very sentimental grave old gentleman, chatted to, and challenged her to bet, in so civil a manner, she could not refuse ; in two hours she had lost one hundred and fifty guineas—and then declined playing, having, as she frankly confessed, lost all her money.

The

The sentimental Gentleman begged she would do him the honor to make him her banker.

Ellen was too ignorant to understand his meaning, he explained, "what sir, and so run in debt," said she, with vivacity, "Oh, no."

The Ladies with great difficulty concealed their contempt, the poor thing was so very silly.

Ellen now looked for Lady Gertrude, who she found at the same table with her friend Lady Autumn, and most unconscionably was she fleeced by her very old acquaintance.

I have lost all my money, Madam, said Ellen, shewing her empty purse, and laughing —

Lady Gertrude sat reddening over her cards, without regarding her.

The

The other table was immediately full, all parties were as intent on their cards, as if their existence was at stake.

I wonder, thought Ellen, looking round, when the conversazzioni begins.

Just then Lady Gertrude directed her servant to be called, in a voice in which there was neither sentiment, or good humour, and she was hastily quitting her dear friend Lady Autumn, without one trait of antient friendship on her countenance.

Ellen joined her, "dear Madam you would not leave *me*."

"Oh, I forgot, I beg pardon," and she stalked as fast as possible to her carriage, and the instant it moved from the door, began a regular, and succinct account of the games she had played, the cards she had held, and the bets she had made; in all which she had not made a single mistake,
or

or deviated in one instance from the rules laid down by Hoyle ; that therefore Lady Autumn and Miss Pendergraft must have cheated.

Ellen was astonished; cheat! Lady Autumn, cheat!

Oh! Lady Gertrude observed, *that* was no such an unprecedented thing, Lady Autumn was always famous for it.

Heavens! thought Ellen, what an acquaintance to preserve ones character.

It was near two when they got home, and the first evening Ellen had spent from the protecting side of her fond Lord; he welcomed her with the sincerest affection, and heard of her loss at play with no more apparent regret than she herself told it,—he immediately replenished her purse, and in the greatest good humour, listened to her account of the manner in which she had passed the evening.

I have

I have before said, Ellen's natural disposition was lively, it was perhaps so to excess. In the enjoyment of every indulgence, that can render a gay, dissipated life delightful; the object of admiration wherever she appeared; never addressed at home, but in the soothing voice of affection, or abroad, but in the insinuating one of flattery; *followed, imitated*, and courted by all the gay world; in high health, and in the full glow of conscious beauty; is it to be wondered, that spirit, that natural vivacity, which rendered her life at Code Gwyn, one continued scene of sportive amusement, should, *so* situated in London, sometimes *exceed* the exact limits of *discretion*?

She was an excellent *mimic*, the Earl had often been amused, when between themselves, she would imitate his aunts, in their peculiarities and disputes; forgetting now, that although Lady Autumn had, as Lady Gertrude said, "cheated a little," she was that Lady's most esteemed friend; that Miss Pendergraft

dergraft was her constant correspondent, and had been in former times her *confidante*; or that the whole of the company who were invited on purpose to meeting Lady Gertrude, were her particular intimates: she sat down, and with great cleverness, as well as good humour, gave so striking a specimen of the *persons, manners and conversation*, at Lady Autumn's assembly, that Lady Frances, who had declined going, and Lady Margaret, who had taken that pretence for staying at home, and the Earl, who all knew the people she described, burst into convulsive fits of laughter; even Lady Gertrude relaxed her solemn features into a smile.

"Be merry and wise," says the old proverb, but shew me a witty creature under eighteen, who ever was wise when merry encouraged by the success of her imitations, on she went, and though last, not least, concluded with *Lady Gertrude* herself, whose inward vexation, before she left the card table,

table, and invectives against her friend's chicane, afterwards were indeed *fair* subjects, tho' not *wise* ones.

Lady Gertrude arose with indignation, "really Madam," said the enraged maiden, you have been taken out of your sphere, you should have been an actress."—

Lord Castle Howel reddened, but Ellen's good humour was invincible.

"And I should have liked it vastly," replied she, standing up and composing her features; let me see, what was it my Lord first taught me, "She never told her love, but let concealment like a worm 'ith bud, feed on her damask cheek;" and then I forget what followed, something about green and yellow melancholy, but the best was at last, "she smiled at grief," now that's what I shall always do."

A jaundiced imagination, sees its own colour in every thing, Lady Gertrude felt that

that Ellen's irony was just, and well applied, tho' her countenance wanted not circumstance, it had yet a good deal of both green, and yellow in it, which all the washes (and they were not a few,) she had employed herself and her woman, many years in making, could not remove; and she doubted not but Shakespeare himself was now introduced to insult *her*:—without giving the salutations of the night, therefore, she took a taper off a side table, and stalked to her apartment, leaving her sister and niece laughing, both at *her* and her *friends*.

As soon as she was out of sight, the incorrigible Ellen took her taper, and having lighted it, with the same indignant look, finished her imitations, by stalking to her dressing room, exactly in Lady Gertrude's manner, the Ladies again burst into fits of laughter, but in separating, Lady Frances observed, "all this was very impertinent."

CHAP. III.

LORD Castle Howel had amused himself several mornings, with purchasing a number of elegant books, to furnish Ellen's library, and requested she would look at them; her answer was as simple as true, "she would be very glad to do it, but really she had.—Not time,"

"Not time?"——

"No, indeed! I have not,"—and a loud rap at the door, confirmed in part the assertion; it was a Lady of high rank, come to drop a card, previous to an invitation to her ball, and the instant after the Duchess of—called and was admitted; this Lady's visit was, it is true, short, but as the Countess was *at home*, it was followed by a succession of idlers, who occupied the whole of the day, till it was time to dress for dinner—
and

and in the evening, at the request of Lady Frances, she accompanied her to Lady Daub's.—

Here were crowded rooms, and a numerous assembly of people of high distinction; Lady Daub herself was a dowager of quality, whose face had been literally *masked* the last twenty years of her life; on that mask, the roses and lilies were in perpetual bloom; she had confined in a corner of her mansion, several fine women, whom she had brought into the world, but who, in no other sense, had reason to call her *mother*; they were *too* full grown, *too* handsome, and *too* amiable to be shewn to the world; and she *too* sensible of the injury she did them, to bear their company when alone:—alone! did I say, that was a situation in which Lady Daub never found herself, but when her mask wanted repair.—*means—Lady Archer*

At the assembly of such a woman, some old fashioned readers may suppose, few of

the well informed cultivated beings, who *credit* the list of fashion, would be found ; but such is the prevalence of custom, such the rage for dissipation, and such the necessity of *killing time*, that many of the most amiable of that description, were mixed in the transient crowd that entered and retired.

Lady Castle Howel, and Lady Frances, were among the *select party* invited to supper ; the gay Lothario, was also one of the chosen, as was the all accomplished Lord Charles Dash, his son, and Lord Claverton.

Lord Castle Howel's inveterate head ache, prevented his being ever in those late parties ;—there was dancing in one of the lower rooms ; a pharo table in another, and the rest filled with card parties.

The Countess cut in, but her ears were attracted by the sound of the music, and she, as usual, lost every thing she staked ; Lord Claverton stood behind her chair.—“ I have lost all my money,” said Ellen, “ somebody
will

will have the goodness to take my place."—
Lord Charles Dash begged he might try
her luck for her.

"No, pray don't, I always lose."

Lord Charles took her place.

"Oh, Lord Claverton, I am glad to see you,
—will you join the dancers?"

Lord Claverton, with an air of transport,
led her down stairs, and they were dancing
with great spirit, when Lord Charles, and
Lady Frances joined them, with a fullpurse;
"you have been fortunate, Lady Castle
Howel," said Lord Charles, "here are your
winnings."

Ellen drew back, Lady Frances explained,
that Lord Charles having merely taken *her*
cards, if he had lost, it would have been
a debt of honor due from her; she accepted
the purse and continued dancing.—

The reader may believe, Lord Claverton lost no opportunity of paying his court to his fair partner,—he did indeed play off all the artillery of sighs, looks, short absences, and sudden recoveries, &c. &c. but he might as well have been at the pharo table, dancing was an exercise Ellen both excelled and delighted in; and as it was the first amusement of the kind she had been at, since her arrival in town, enjoyed it *too* much to attend to the soft nothings of a man so perfectly indifferent to her: when the last dance was gone down, there was a short interval before supper; they sauntered to the pharo table, and in ten minutes Ellen won the bank; this was the first moment she felt an inclination to game, it was impossible not to be pleased at winning two thousand guineas, in so short a time; Lord Charles, and Lord Claverton, congratulated her on her success,—supper was announced before she had time to lose back any of her winnings, and there was no play afterwards.—

At

At four o'clock she found the Earl waiting in her dressing room.—

“ You have been well entertained, my love,” said he, shewing his watch.

“ Yes, I have been dancing, and am quite tired.”

“ Dancing ! have you, and pray who had the honor to be your partner ?”

“ The honor was Lord Claverton's, but I believe he was heartily tired of it, for you know he is a poor creature, and I would not let him sit down. Oh ! but I have been at cards too ; see, my dear Lord, how rich I am,”—taking out the loaded purse, a quantity of guineas fell on the carpet which she ordered Winifred to pick up, without troubling herself to count the number ; her pocket book was next displayed full of notes—this was the first painful sensation the good Earl had felt since his marriage ; while she continued

losing small sums, without caring about them, he knew the rage of gaming would not hurt her; but such a flow of success would have the double *ill* effect, of rendering her anxious to obtain it in future, and lessening her estimation of the sums she had hitherto reckoned capital—he was lost in a disagreeable reverie, when Ellen complained of fatigue, and they retired to rest.

“Well,” said Lady Frances, when they met at four the next afternoon, for Ellen’s head had ached, and she was too much fatigued to rise before, “and how did you like Lady Daub?”

Ellen declared she frightened her.

“Frightened you! she is one of the politest women of the age.”

“Oh! I don’t mean her manners, it was that shocking unnatural red and white.”

Lady

Lady Gertrude, who had not been cordially reconciled to the Countess, since Lady Autumn's night, smiled contemptuously, "yes, Lady Daub's red and white, has a fortitude *time* has no power over."

"Is she a very grave person, Madam?" said Ellen.

"Far from it" replied Lady Frances, "she is just of my disposition."

"And of your age, too?"

"I am not so old as Lady Daub, she was a woman when I wore white frocks."

"Well! I should not have thought that; but does she never smile?"

"No, I defy her to do that," said Lady Gertrude.

"Make as free with your *own* friends as you please sister," interrupted Lady Frances.

"You should give that hint to Lady Castle Howel, sister," answered Lady Gertrude, spitefully.

"I give it to you, Ma'am—but don't you think the Duke delightful niece? and his son, Lord Charles?"

"He plays his *cards* well, I dare say; he won my money back even in less time than I lost it."

The Earl, on whom the event of the last night had made an unpleasant impression, now joined, "but on the whole, Ellen, how did you like your entertainment?"

"Charming! delightful! there were many very sweet women, and some agreeable men, and I made several very pleasant new acquaintances."

Lord Claverton was announced, he received the thanks of the man, whose peace he

he was meditating to ruin, for his politeness to the Ladies of his family, and came to offer them tickets for the professional concert.

"A concert! Oh! pray let us go," cried Ellen, "I have not been at a concert yet." The Earl tenderly anxious for her health, reminded her of her head-ache, and the fatigues of the last night.—

One *was* gone and she had quite recovered the other.—

"You complained of want of time my Ellen, had you not better devote this one evening to your library?"

"Oh, reading, she was sure would give her the head-ache." Lord Castle Howel sighed at the remembrance of the happy days past in the library at Castle Howel, but could not prevail on himself to oppose, any farther, the wish of a wife he doated

on, and therefore agreed to accompany her.—

When once the mind of a young woman, has taken a bias for pleasure, unrestrained by a fear of consequence—or a prudential regard to expence, it is in vain to expect she will be either sated, or even gratified; amusing, good humoured, gay, witty, and pleasant, Lady Castle Howel's company would have been courted without the personal charms, which were sure to attract a crowd of fashionable men, wherever she appeared; a round of engagements employed every hour of her time, and a constant routine of amusements, every avocation of her mind.—

Joseph's attendance on Winifred was continued, but with little advantage to his employer, for the Countess had no *time* to talk to *her*, or to hear, as formerly, the *wonderfuls* she had to say—but his Lordship's close attendance was talked of every where, and by every body but those most concerned.—

At

At length the happy intimation was given, that the Countess was pregnant, the Earl's fondness could not increase, but his anxiety for the welfare of Ellen did,—he remonstrated anxiously, and tenderly, against fatigue and late hours, and was joined by the two old spinisters, who entreated her to retire into the Country. But the country had *now* no charms for Ellen.

She had a list of engagements that would last till the hour of her accouchment, besides her own nights, which were always brilliantly attended; but she constantly promised to return home at an early hour, and *as constantly* broke her word; she had made a set of intimates of women, who were at the head of every thing, the business of whose lives seemed to be, that of getting rid of their husband's estates, but they were women of *character!!!*

She played high, and her losses were so frequent, that the Earl, with great delicacy,
informed

informed her he was unable to answer such frequent demands.

Thunder struck and amazed, she turned pale, she had judged of the riches of her husband, by his liberality, and supposed one as inexhaustible as the other.—

Lady Gertrude entered,—she found her near fainting, and terrified lest her disorder should bring on an event that would frustrate all their hopes, drew from her the cause, and immediately supplied her with money to discharge every debt of honor, with advice to her not to play again.

Ellen had selected one among her acquaintance, to whom she was in the habit of speaking of all her affairs, *secrets* she had *none*; the honorable Mrs. Morley, Lord Durant's eldest daughter, married to a rich banker, with whom she was, on account of her expences, at perpetual variance; Ellen told that Lady what had happened, ingenuously regretted her

her extravagance, and resolved to leave off play. Mrs. Morley burst into a fit of laughter.—Ellen could not divine the cause; her friend assured her, the Earl was *bumming* her; —he does not like you should spend so much money, and he knows the simple goodness of your heart so well, he takes this method of interesting your feelings in his own cause; he *must* be rich, *he* or his musty old sister, never lived at any expence; but come, we shall be late, Mrs. Hewart's doors are open early; I teased Morley out of five hundred to day, and am resolved to be a bold adventurer to night, “allons.”

Mrs. Morley *was* bold and successful, Ellen caught the infection, instead of paying her debts of honor, she lost all the money Lady Gertrude had given her; Lord Charles Dash, one of her creditors, walked up, he condoled with her on her repeated ill fortune; but “heaven is just,” continued he, “those charms alone are more than should fall to the lot of one happy mortal,” and he seized her

her hand, from which she had just drawn her glove, and with a freedom, he had never before attempted, imprinted on it a kiss.

Overwhelmed with shame, regret and mortification, she wanted, for the moment, power to assert her own dignity.

Encouraged by her passiveness, and invited by the embarrassment he knew she was in (for Mrs. Morley had, in mere kindness, told him how the Earl had treated her *friend*,) he fixed his eyes on hers, and drawing his chair near her, whispered an inundation of nonsense, every period ending in the word *love*.

Poor Ellen felt, in that instant, every sensation of anguish, the human mind *could feel* in such a situation; pride, shame and virtue, struggled in her bosom,—her cheek glowed, but when she looked on the face of the unfeeling insulter, and recollected she
was

was in his debt, without means to enfranchise her honor, *shame* was predominant.

Lord Claverton, *constant* to the settled point of all his desires; was an anxious and interested observer of this scene; he well knew Lord Castle Howel's fortune would not support his wife's extravagance; he saw with pleasure she was sinking deeper and deeper into the vortex of dissipation; on her propensity to play rested *his* chief hope,—he wished to see her embarrassed, and in debt, but not to Lord Charles Dash—the designs of his Lordship were *too* palpable to be misunderstood, and the eye of jealousy *too* keen not to see through every disguise,—he could not bear any other man should take a liberty he *dared* not to think of; he saw Lord Charles's presumptuous hope in his eyes—but how to rescue her, in that moment, from a situation so desperate?

It happened that Ellen at that instant looked up, her brow, no longer the throne of
Momus,

Momus, was contracted and overcast; a tear trembled on her eyelid, and her cheek lost its lovely bloom,—Lord Claverton could not bear this, he advanced to her, and presented his pocket book—"Lord Castle Howel, Madam requested me to deliver you this, and expects you at home as soon as possible."

Ellen glanced her eye at the book, she saw it was not her husband's, and her first impulse was to return it to Lord Claverton,—in the vague, indeterminate manner, in which she held the book, Lord Charles had also an opportunity of seeing Lord Viscount Claverton's name;—rage filled his lordly bosom; Ellen met his eyes, they were so hateful, and his touch (for he had again taken her hand) so petrifying, that she received the book, and took notes out to the amount of his debt, and turned from him without speaking. Mrs. Morley, exulting in her own success, declined going home,—the Countess, who was too much agitated however
to

to stay for her, ordered her servants, and on the first flight of stairs met Lord Claverton, "Oh my Lord" said she, half sobbing, and involuntarily giving her hand, "from what a situation did you relieve me!" He respectfully bowed, restraining every desire to imprint his lips, where so late he had seen Lord Charles's.-----

Ellen happened to look behind her, and saw Lord Charles leaning over the banister, she quickened her step, and handed by Lord Claverton got into her carriage, "I shall see you soon, my Lord,"---he bowed---Lord Charles brushed by, and the vis a vis drove off.

Lord Castle Howel was subject to inveterate head aches, which obliged him, as soon as he was seized with them, to lay down, during these paroxysms, he could not bear the least noise,---he happened, unfortunately for our heroine, to be in one of these fits at her return,---she resolved, during her ride home,

home, to confess her fault, tell him of Lord Claverton's kindness, and vow never more to touch a card; but after sleeping on the matter, she found *confession* of aggravated faults *not quite so* pleasant.—Lord Castle Howel was not recovered, and the repetition of a story so reprehensible, might bring on a relapse; the old ladies complimented her, on her early return home the night before, and she could not resolve to tell them how little merit she had in that matter.

Lord Claverton did not appear next day, it was one of her nights, neither he nor Lord Charles attended, they had both cards, and were used to be among the first,---she, however, declined play, to the infinite pleasure of her doating husband; never were the ladies more pleased with her, and never was she more deserving their favour,---the event of the last evening left an impression on her mind, which the more she indulged, the more she was shocked.

A thou-

A thousand men had sworn she was divine; had told her of the lustre of her eyes, the beautiful transparency of her complexion, her fine turned arm and Medicien form, her grace, her wit, had been the theme of praise from the million, but there was a decorum observed in the flattery, the harsh strokes were softened off; the innocence of her look, and propriety of her manners, awed libertinism; and in the midst of gaiety, no word, no action, escaped, to inspire hope in the heart of depravity, from one, whose life and conversation had been under the influence of pure minds, and faultless examples: if she acted without foresight, it was because she wanted experience, to point out dangers *she* did not know existed; if she talked without thought, it was because she was used to look inward, where she found no one sentiment condemned by conscience, or restrained by delicacy; but now she had the "debtors pillow," his debasement, his anxiety, and her purity, recoiled, from a recollection of the voice and manner of the professed debauchee, who

who had insulted her with sentiments, as humiliating as hateful.—Many were the times and opportunities, when Lord Charles might have availed himself of being alone with her, to give the conversation the same indecent turn, had he not been restrained by respect; that *respect* she had deprived herself of; and the consequence of making her only proper protector acquainted with his presumption, might be fatal.

So far from loving play, cards were her aversion, before an inconsiderate compliance with fashion, tempted her to game; could they be less so now, when the consequence was so injurious to her peace and honor?

Mrs. Morley's insinuation, that the Earl had been guilty of duplicity, in his assigned reason, for not supplying her with money, had not gained the smallest degree of credit, even when it seduced her into so fatal an error; and now, seated by her husband, whose eyes fondly fixed on her, spoke tenderness

derness unutterable, the calumny pierced her heart ; and she endeavoured to reconcile her feelings to her conscience, by renewing those attentions, he so well deserved, but which dissipation had deprived him of.—

Lady Gertrude hinted, she was expected to be more with her guests ; she complained of fatigue, and begged her ladyship would apologize,---the company were as usual select for supper ; Lady Castle Howel knew nothing of expence, *that* was the department of her complaisant sister-in-law, she was only solicitous to have her table look as well, or better, than other persons of her rank ; it was particularly magnificent this night, but besides Lord Charles Dash, and Lord Claverton, Lady Margaret found another *absentée*, Dr. Macsheat had not attended, nor any more than the other gentleman, sent a card ; the company stay'd late, but Lady Castle Howel's indisposition was an apology for *her* early retiring.

Ah ! how unconscious was she of the sorrows that awaited her ; how often did she afterwards

wards regret, that an eternal sleep had not for ever closed her eyes; doomed to weep for the mere inadvertencies of heedless youth, as for the blackest crimes.

Lord Charles Dash was, in respect to modern dissipation, an improved picture of his illustrious father; the most noble, and puissant Duke of Dash, Marquis Squandervelt, Viscount Sterling, Baron Dunder, knight companion of the most noble order of the garter, of his majesty's most wise and honorable privy council, and one of the first, and most ancient ornaments of the British peerage. Lord Charles Dash, second son to the above mentioned noble personage, was six foot high, colonel of a regiment of horse, and a member of parliament; he swore fluently, gamed immoderately, made love indiscriminately, won more money, fought more duels, ruined more women, and was more the *thing*, than any Lord of his standing in the kingdom: it is

need-

needless to say he was an immense favourite of the ladies.

The noble Duke his father, it is but justice to allow, did all in the power of example, to render his sons as famous as himself,—he had three leading traits in *his* character,—he borrowed every man's money, seduced every man's wife, and broke every man's confidence, on whose weakness or credulity he could practise; he shortened the days of two amiable wives, women of virtue, character and fortune, and he was now kept in the most servile subjection, by a low bred woman, who had neither.

Had Lord Charles's understanding been dignified by more noble pursuits, it would have been respectable, he had read much, made the grand tour, conversed with an elegant fluency, not only in his mother tongue, but in the languages of most of the European courts, and to finish his portrait was immensely rich.

In an age, when Sir Robert Walpole's axiom, that every man had his price, may be almost transferred to the other sex, Lord Charles Dash's success will not be doubted; but excess of dissipation had so far blunted the keen feelings, which had carried him headlong in pursuit of all that was fair and new,—it was not *mere* beauty, no; nor modesty, that could *now* touch a heart, surfeited with sweets; it must be something extraordinary,—out of the common run: one whole month he had followed a child under fourteen, whom at last having purchased of her venal parents, at a very high price, he returned to them, and the town, after three days possession: he had even felt a momentary desire for the English Ninon, after she had passed her grand climacteric,—the lady, who well knew how to make the most of his folly, accepted a handsome gratification for receiving, and a still handsomer one, for dismissing him.—

He was invited by Lady Daub, on the first night of our heroine's appearance at her assembly,

assembly, to see a rustic, whom the Earl of Castle Howel had married, for the avowed purpose of propagating the species, a mere girl, ignorant, and inexperienced, but extremely beautiful.—

He found her to surpass all he had expected in the last description, but, tho' young, and new to the circle of fashion, graceful, easy and sensible; he was introduced by the Earl himself, at an accidental meeting in Hyde Park, but did not then see enough of her to be sure Lady Daub's picture was not overcharged,---he was however a lost man, from the instant he became sufficiently acquainted, to be treated without reserve, and taking it on the credit of usage le monde, doubted not, but a young girl, who for riches would marry an old man, might, on certain conditions, be induced to intrigue with a young one,---this settled maxim, left him at liberty to sigh, and look, and look and sigh,---to plan,---to reconnoitre---and, as

occasion offered to act: with an air of the utmost indifference he won her money, and with an insinuating politeness offered revenge; ---still he was fortunate; they doubled stakes, ---fate was still obdurate; he pressed her to go on---she had already exceeded the limits of her purse—she ventured and was still a loser;—overwhelmed with shame and vexation, she apologized for not paying him—he entreated she would not mention a circumstance that rendered him happy.

An opening was made at the loo table,---he asked her to change her luck—fortune could not always persecute so lovely a votary! —he entreated he might be her banker, and putting his purse into her hand, led her to the loo table.

The party received her with every expression of politeness, and the secret joy a certainty of winning inspires—she hardly knew what she was doing, or going to do, she however reckoned what money was in the purse,

purse, and (with a heart aching with a sensation, which could be neither called regret, or self reproach, and yet an indefinable mixture of both,) sat down, her honorable friend standing at her chair back.—For some time she won, and inwardly exulted, she could at least pay off part of her debt of honor—she arose and ordered her servants; on looking round the table so many crest fallen visages met her eye; so many voices entreating her stay; her servants not being ready, and a something in her bosom which pointed her going with a large sum, from a table where she had sat so short a time, as selfish, she defeated herself, and lost every shilling, both of what she had won, and what Lord Charles had lent her; become desperate by this sudden turn, she played on credit, till the indolence of her adversaries towards *her*, and their eagerness to *each other*, shewed her of how little consequence she was, in her present stripped, and bankrupt situation, and her motion to go was no longer opposed.

Hardly able to support herself, she was led to her carriage by Lord Claverton. It was to pay the debts incurred at the loo table, Lady Gertrude had supplied her ; for shame of the amount of the sum she owed Lord Charles, confidence in his politeness, hopes that the Earl's liberality would soon enable her to pay him, or perhaps the more rational design, of taking some fond moment to confess to him, and him alone, her extravagant folly, prevented her mentioning the whole amount of her debt : With such a scheme in his head, as the seduction of the young Countess, brought nearer perfection than he could have hoped, in so short a time ; how could so noble a spirit be otherwise than enraged, when another noble spirit insinuated itself between him, and his prey ? he heard of Lady Castle Howel's penchant for Lord Claverton, but as from his Lordship's extreme caution, he appeared to be rather an observer, than an admirer, concluded the report was either untrue, or which was just the same, the intrigue over—when therefore with so little ceremony,
Lord

Lord Claverton put it in her power to pay her debt of honor to him; which to say the truth, had been done in so delicate a way, that the eye of candour might have imputed it to honorable friendship; he, who judged of other men by himself, and had long been acquainted with Lord Claverton's disposition and character, had no doubt but his Lordship's designs, were similar to his own; too proud for contention, too peevish for contradiction, and too much in love, to act with reason or consistence, he set himself down, for an injured man, and Lord Claverton for the person who had injured him.

The Viscount's sentiments were equally vindictive; both their noble bosoms burned with rage, and panted for revenge; Lord Charles sent Lord Claverton a challenge, which, tho' fighting was a trade he had resigned, he accepted, and made every preparation for the glorious on-set, neither of these great minded noblemen, once recollecting, there was a husband in the world, to

whom they were offering injuries, human nature could not bear, or honor forgive.—

CHAP. IV.

THE meeting took place in Hyde-Park, at eight on the evening their absence, so much surprised the Ladies in Grosvenor Street; Lord Claverton was dangerously wounded, and Lord Charles set off for the Continent, till the event should be known.

Most unfortunately for our heroine, Lord Charles had an humble friend, who flattered both his vices, and his follies; from this man none of his great designs, or achievements were concealed; he had progressively been
the

the confidant of his admiration, his hope, his expectations, and finally of his jealousy, which with additions, suggestions and inferences, Captain Durell (not being enjoined to secrecy, or bound to veracity) took special care should be fully comprehended at every breakfast table in the fashionable circle; but had not the affair been thus en train, it would have been impossible to conceal it from the family, whose honor, and whose peace, was thus wantonly exposed to the idle and malevolent gossip of the town; for Lord Claverton, constant to his medical friend, had entrusted him with the duel, without hinting at the cause, and directed his attendance in the Park.

Dr. Macsnean was not wanting in medical skill, but perceiving from the situation of the wound, and the weak constitution of his patron, that it would be attended with danger, immediately sent for two surgeons, and a physician of the first eminence to his assistance.

Neither were *these* gentlemen enjoined to secrecy, so that the duel, with what particulars Captain Durell chose to add, was not only in private circles, but in every coffee-house in town.—

The two letters we subjoin were carried to the bed side of Lady Frances, and Lady Gertrude Howel, while Dr. Macsheat and Lady Margaret were shut up in her ladyship's dressing room, and the Earl was reading in his closet.

For Lady Gertrude Howel.

“Lady Autumn, and Miss Pendegrass
 “most sincerely condole, with Lady Ger-
 “trude Howel, on the unfortunate denou-
 “ment in her family; Lady Autumn ex-
 “pressed her ideas, as delicately as she
 “could to her friend Lady Gertrude, on
 “the unequal alliance, certainly Lord
 “Castle Howel might have found a bride
 “under the prudent direction of Lady Ger-
 “trude,

“trude, more approximating to the opinion
 “of his friends, as well as more suitable to
 “himself; but what can be said? Miss Pen-
 “degrafs supposes a divorce must ensue, she
 “is shocked at the depravity of the age, two
 “illicit connexions at once, is a refine-
 “ment on vice, decreed for the beautiful
 “Countess of Castle Howel.—Lady Autumn
 “hopes the report of the Earl’s fortune be-
 “ing deranged by his wife’s extravagance is
 “not true.—

For Lady Frances Howel.

“DEAR FANNY.”

“I am dying with the tooth-ache (Lady
 Daub’s teeth were *all* of Parkinson’s manu-
 factoring) “or should have flown to you;
 “your sufferings, my dear creature, must be
 “intense, and I feel them very sincerely,
 “but the thing itself is no more than I
 “foretold; if men will make wives of girls,
 “who should be dressing their dolls, they
 “must expect the consequences, but that

“ fly devil, Lord Charles ! I declare, I am
 “ seriously angry with him, to take /advan-
 “ tage of such a poor simple young thing ;
 “ as to Claverton ’tis an old affair I find,
 “ Morley was in all her secrets, adieu come
 “ to me as soon as possible, that I may tell
 “ you every thing I’ve heard.

Yours,

HERMOINE DAUB.

The ladies rubbed their eyes, and read the notes over and over—without understanding a syllable, Lady Frances being the most alert of the two was soon in her sister’s room.—

“ I have the oddest letter from Lady Daub,” said she.

“ Read this note from Lady Autumn,” answered Lady Gertrude.

Their astonishment increased, they hurried down stairs, Lady Margaret and Dr. Macsheat

Macfhean joined them;—the Doctor's information of the duel was circumstantial, but from his own knowledge he could speak no further; each of the spinsters ordered her chair.——

At Lady Autumn's, Lady Gertrude heard, that her niece had intrigued with Lord Claverton, both before, and since she was married, that she had forsaken him for a lover, who had it more in his power to support her extravagance—that however Lord Claverton having furnished her with money, to pay some play debts, it had betrayed the connexion to Lord Charles Dash, who challenged Claverton and killed him.—

Lady Gertrude's astonishment is not to be expressed, and prone as she was to take the worst part of every story that reached her, a constant observation of the conduct of Lady Castle Howel, from the instant of finding her at her grandmother's feet, till that moment, had given her

her so different an impression of her heart, notwithstanding her occasional levity, that she could not help treating what her good friends, Lady Autumn and Miss Pendegrass were saying, with every mark of incredulity.

The Ladies were resolved to convince her of her family misfortune; they were perhaps apprehensive, she would not only remain under her present security herself, but communicate it to the rest of the family, for whose honor, they protested, they were too much concerned, to suffer it to be injured, by a wicked young woman; Captain Durell was therefore sent for, and he, on authority of Lord Charles's confidence, declared, that he knew he had supplied Lady Castle Howel with several different sums of money, to a large amount; that Lord Charles was a man of the world, and attached, as he certainly was, to the fair sex, yet it was not to be supposed, he would part so liberally with money, for which he was to receive no consideration; the Captain would be grieved to
advance

advance any thing to a lady's prejudice, on mere conjecture; but he thought he might venture to assert, Lord Charles knew in general, what he was about; with respect to Lord Claverton, that matter was beyond a doubt, and Lord Charles, when he sent the challenge, declared to *him* that Claverton intrigued with Lady Castle Howel, who had jilted him.—

Lady Gertrude was really affected; "If this be true," cried she, sighing, at the probable disappointment of all her hopes.

True! Miss Pendegrass declared it was past all doubt, and that she had always observed a certain cast of countenance in Lady Castle Howel, that disgusted *her*, and believed, she had spread her snares for more than Lord Charles, and Lord Claverton—Sir Solomon Spindle.—

Lady Gertrude interrupted her with impatience; "what day did this unfortunate
affair

‘affair happen?’—The duel, Captain Durell informed her, was yesterday, but the transaction which occasioned it was the day before, at Mrs. Stewart’s. Lord Charles having liberally furnished Lady Castle Howel with money, to pay some play debts, accidentally saw Lord Claverton give her his pocket book for the same purpose.—

“Good God!” exclaimed Lady Gertrude, “some mistake, some inexplicable mystery is in all this, for I myself gave her money to pay play debts the same day.”

Lady Autumn, and Miss Pendegrass laughed out, at this, and congratulated their friend, on being added to the number of dupes made by the little welch novice.

Lady Gertrude took rather an abrupt leave, and ordered her chair to Lord Claverton’s, where she found the street covered with straw, the hall door on jar, and the porter in waiting, who put her name on the
plate,

state, but could only say, his Lord was ill; without a syllable that led to the information, she was in pursuit of.—

Lady Frances, on her part, found her friend's dressing room crowded, the company highly diverted with every thing, but Lord Claverton's danger, which as it involved Lord Charles in some difficulties, was really tremendous—*here*, it was, tho' entirely believed, treated as a thing of course, and from seeing Lady Frances abroad, half the company concluded, the family would think of it in the same way; Lady Daub however, seeing her Fanny look very grave, took her into her closet, and eagerly repeated *her story*. “ Lord Charles, who, dear creature, was but too generous, had been very lavish of presents to Lady Castle Howel, and among other things of great value, gave her a pocket book, in which were bank notes to a very considerable amount, that happening to see Lord Claverton take out a pocket book at Mrs. Stewart's, he fancied it like,
and

and indeed it proved to be the one, he had given Lady Castle Howel; "now you know Fanny," added her ladyship, in the prettiest list imaginable, "that was too bad—Lord Charles challenged and killed Lord Claverton. I am sorry the girl did not know better, they say, my dear, she is with child, can you guess at the father?"

Poor Lady Frances could not speak for some minutes, but as her's was the sort of mind that, a little conscious of its own faults, was, if not more lenient, more credulous, to those of others, she implicitly believed the whole story, and far from feeling any delicate embarrassment on the occasion, resolved to be, if possible, the person who should first carry this pleasant news to my Lord.—

She was however mistaken, for tho' she reached Grosvenor-Street long before her sister—the business was done.

Mrs. Morley, who could not, at this juncture, for the world, visit the Countess, was
however

however not under the same difficulty with Lady Margaret, having called, in her way from Lady Daub's, at every door where she could get admittance at that early hour, and having, to her infinite gratification, found the matter was past doubt, and Lady Castle Howel's fun set, she ordered her footman to rap with great caution at the Earl's door, and enquire for Lady Margaret Howel.

Mrs. Morley's name was announced, Lady Margaret was for being denied, but the Dr. who could (if he would have spoken out) have cleared the matter as far as related to Lord Claverton, had yet his doubts about Lord Charles; the rage in which his patron prepared for the duel, convinced him *he* at least *thought* he had cause for jealousy, he was therefore curious to hear what Lady Castle Howel's most intimate friend would say on the subject, and at his instance she was admitted.

Mrs. Morley was too pretty to be ever out of humour with her own features, yet
on

on such an occasion it was proper to *seem* sad, she entered with a demure step, and down cast look, and being seated, sighed and drew out her hankerchief.

“ Lady Castle Howel is not up, Madam,” said Lady Margaret—but,—

“ Oh! my dear Lady Margaret, don’t name her, poor unhappy woman, ’tis all over you know, one can’t ever think of visiting her; but how are you? and how is the good Earl?”

The good Earl was at the door, he was crossing to his Lady’s dressing room, but on hearing her friend’s voice, supposed she was already down; at his sudden entrance Lady Margaret turned pale, and Mrs. Morley reddened; his ideas were confused, something he thought had been said about Lady Castle Howel, he could not understand, and the looks, both of Mrs. Morley, and his sister, were alarming.—

“ What

“What is the matter, Madam?” said he, hastily, “you were speaking of my Ellen!”

“Ah! my Lord, your tendernefs, your well known indulgence,” answered Mrs. Morley, in a whining tone, “for that ungrateful.”—

Lord Castle Howel was not disposed to be trifled with; “who? what did she mean?” asked he in a stern terrific voice.

Mrs. Morley was awed—she hesitated.

Lord Castle Howel was in agonies.—

Dr. Macsnean then calmly said, he feared Lord Claverton was dying.

“What is that to me? or Lady Castle Howel?”

“Lord Charles Dash challenged him.”—

“Why

"Why am I tortured about that? where is my Ellen? where?" his looks betrayed the perturbation of his mind, and Lady Margaret endeavoured to sooth him, by saying, the Countess was yet in bed.—

Winifred was called, who said she was in a sweet sleep, "cot pless her."

Mrs. Morley was now more herself, she shrugged her shoulders, cast up her eyes, and sighed as if in detestation of one party, and compassion for the other.—

"Forso fine a face" said the Earl, peevishly, "I never saw one so unhappy in expression."

Lady Frances at this instant entered, and with a vast deal of dignity, took her nephew's hand, was glad to see him bear it so well, and asked if he had got to the truth of the story.

That there was a story to be told, in which he was concerned, was evident, altho' it was

not designed he should understand it, he therefore only replied, he would thank Lady Frances to tell it the way *she* had heard it, which she very obligingly did, and to her honor be it spoken (for such a tale) with very few additions of her own.

The Earl was thunderstruck, he trembled with indignation, and every throbbing pulse bore testimony to his feelings, but let my reader not believe the horrid story, thus unconnected, and unsupported, could find credit in his manly breast—Ellen intrigue! the innocent, the chaste, the modest Ellen! for so she had always appeared to him, she a mercenary intriguer! the whose little foibles (the effect as he believed of the pernicious examples of a dissipated age) he had even imprudently indulged! and who, when she signified her want of a greater sum than it was convenient for him to advance, was so cheerfully supplied by his aunt,—she accept money, or presents from a professed debauchee, impossible! he declared his life and
fortune

fortune should be devoted to the searching out, and punishing the base inventor of so daring a calumny—He demanded Lady Frances's Author.—

A whole room full of morning visitors at Lady Daub's.—

“And your's Madam!” to Mrs. Morley. She had heard from so many, it was impossible to recollect: now that was a little fib; but as Mrs. Cowley says, fine ladies don't mind fibbing; she knew very well, who had told her; Captain Durell was indeed a married man, but as Mr. Morley was a friendly creature, who kept a good house, and had often a set of jolly fellows about him, and as moreover, Mrs. Morley had a passion for admiration, he found it convenient to be violently in love, without the mortification of disobliging the Lady.—

To her then, as in duty bound, he flew with the news, as soon as Lord Charles set off,

off, by which means, Mrs. Morley had the happiness to be one of the first circulators of the story *herself*, and was actually the person, who carried it to Lady Daub's.—

The Earl, however, swore he would not rest, till his wife's fame, and his own honor was avenged—he called for his hat and was going out, tho' he had not exactly determined where.—

At the foot of the stairs he met Lady Gertrude, just getting out of her chair, so apparently disordered, she was obliged to rest on her servant; and occupied, as the Earl was, by his own feelings, he could not help offering his arm—slow and silent, they ascended; every tongue in Lady Margaret's dressing room, being set going the instant the Earl left it, were stopped at his unexpected return.—

“Oh!” cried Lady Frances, “here is my sister, we shall now know what she has heard.”—

“ She heard !” answered the Earl, “ is the demon of detraction let loose in the world ! do you suppose she has heard !” —

Lady Gertrude, with a deep sigh, and great gravity of countenance, replied, she had heard *too much*, and then enquired of Dr. Macshead after his patient.

The Doctor shook his head, and Mrs. Morley applied to her salts in the prettiest manner imaginable.

The, “ I have heard *too much*,” the sigh, the shake of Lady Gertrude’s head, almost annihilated the Earl ; without understanding why, he sat down, as in expectation of something dreadful, with his eyes fixed on his aunt.

This was entirely a family concern ; perhaps as no person knew the secret terms Dr. Macshead was in by the favour of Lady Margaret,

Margaret, *he* might be excusable for staying, but what detained Mrs. Morley?

When domestic misfortunes begin to be discussed before a third person, they become, from that instant—at once *judge* and *accuser*; they gratify their curiosity, at the expence of your feelings, and their malevolence, at the expence of your passions; you cannot withdraw a confidence you have unthinkingly reposed, without making them your bitter enemies; they remember the extravagance you utter in your agony, but forget the incitement,—their pity is a triumph over your misfortunes—and their consolation an insult to your distress.—Mrs. Morley fancied she had rendered herself of importance sufficient to excuse *her* stay, and she was dying with curiosity, to hear how the family consultation would terminate.

Lady Gertrude however was more guarded than her sister had been, she made Mrs. Morley a formal courtsey, and withdrew,

G 2

followed

followed by the Earl.--- Mrs. Morley now chose to be very attentive to Lady Frances, a servant delivered her sister's compliments, and requested her company; still there was one lady left, the one she came to condole, but scarce had she got a word from Lady Margaret, before a second messenger demanded *her* presence;-- there was nobody now but Dr. Macsheat, who considering her as the cause why he was not admitted to the family confidence, was ill disposed to *entertain*, or be *entertained* by her; he must visit his patient he said.---

"Oh! do let me set you down, my dear Doctor."

He gravely told her, his own carriage waited; she had nothing now for it but to order her servant, and the Doctor handed her to her coach.

Lady Gertrude had by this time entered on her history, which agreed in the main points

points with Lady Frances ; the difference was only in the pocket book, which, at Lady Autumn's was Lord Claverton's; and accidentally seen by Lord Charles, whereas, at Lady Daub's it was Lord Charles's, and given by Lady Castle Howel to Lord Claverton ; but all agreed there had been a duel about the Countess, between two lovers, one of whom at least it was presumed must be a favourite.

“ Good God,” said the Earl, impatiently, “ why do I suffer my heart, to be wrung in this manner, when an angel, on whose brow sits truth, and ingenuity, can and will develop every transaction in which she is concerned, to the confusion of her calumniators, and to the satisfaction of her friends.”

He started up, and was eagerly proceeding to Ellen's room ; Lady Gertrude's prudence again stopped him, she had *revolved* all the likely consequences of this disagreeable business in her own mind ; of worldly wisdom Lady Gertrude had more than her share ; of

worldly affections *none*,---the disappointment of her heart had shut up every avenue to the softer attachments ; resentment, jealousy, slighted love, and wounded pride, had all settled into a calm and most inveterate hatred ; she had more pride, more sense, and more resolution, than her sister, in consequence of which, tho' in trifles they were for ever quarrelling, in *essentials*, *she* always carried her point, not by the coincidence (for she would dispute inch by inch) but by the weakness of Lady Frances,---

To the hatred then she felt for her perfidious lover, life and all its enjoyments had been sacrificed ; and as her sister had equal cause of displeasure, *hers* had been kept alive by the tenets, pride enforced, both in the precept and example of Lady Gertrude ; the hope of cutting off the man she hated, the family she abhorred, from the inheritance she knew they languished after,---was the first consideration on earth to her---allowing Ellen to be all she had heard, still she
was

was pregnant, the main end of the Earl's marriage,—as far as it concerned *her* was answered; what then might not be feared from the effect this discovery, whether true or false, might have on a form so young and delicate? all their present hopes might be in a moment blasted, and should the worst be proved, no future ones could arise.

To these reflections and conclusions, Ellen owed the present protection of Lady Gertrude, who became her warm advocate, and pledged *her own* honor, for that of the Countess. The mind of man is easily persuaded to credit what it wishes, the Earl fondly acceded to all she advanced, and in spite of the recollections of Lady Frances, and the dead cold silence of Lady Margaret, triumphed in the innocence of his Countess.

Lady Margaret not quite so sanguine about the heirship of the title and estate as her aunts,---recalled innumerable instances of Lord Claverton's admiration of Ellen, and

(prior to her brother's widowhood) foretold he would make her a Viscountess,—she had even hinted this to her brother, who far from being displeased, had once congratulated himself on having contributed to the endowments of a young woman, he was sure was born to move in an elevated sphere; she had often mentioned this to the Doctor, as well as her observations on his continued attention; but however ardent the Doctor's admiration of Lady Margaret, he was not subject to *weakness* many a *wiser* man suffers for; he was master of all the Ladies secrets, but his own were uncomeatable.—Nevertheless, on the credit of her own conjectures, Lady Margaret was not so sure of Ellen's innocence, as her brother and aunts appeared to be.

As to Lady Frances, the spirit of contradiction was raised in her, and a bench of bishops could not have inspired her with an atom of charity; she withdrew from the consultation to her own apartment, and made her

her woman confidante of the story ; this person, who was a true waiting maid, could add *another* very *suspicious* circumstance—which was, that Joseph, Lord Claverton's man, visited the Countess's favourite woman every day of his life ; Lady Frances returned in haste with this intelligence, but all further proofs had by this time become unnecessary.

Lady Gertrude had exerted all her powers of rhetoric to carry her favorite point, which was to conceal every circumstance of the affair from the Countess, till after her accouchement ;—to accomplish this, she requested the Earl would feign urgent business in the north, that they might immediately set out for her seat, where it would be impossible any of the slanders invented against her could reach.

Lord Castle Howel objected to the last part of the plan, tho' he very readily acceded to the other, on the ground, that a sudden removal from the capital, without an

explanation due to his wife's injured honor, would confirm, instead of contradict the slander; but Lady Gertrude was too deeply interested not to persist; how, she demanded, could Lady Castle Howel's repose be undisturbed, while such a mortifying matter was in agitation? and Winifred passing the door at that instant, to answer her Lady's bell, they agreed to go to her dressing room, and inform her of the intended, and immediate journey.—She had not yet left her bed chamber and the diamond ornaments she wore the preceding night lay on the toilet in her dressing room; Lady Gertrude, from a natural impulse of female restlessness, fauntered towards the table, and tho' she had seen them a thousand times before, looked at her bracelet, and admired the likeness of the Earl,—who also approached the table; but reader, feel for his surprise, his anguish, his distress, when he saw, lying in her jewel case, as he was going to deposit the bracelet in it, a pocket book with—

“Lord

“Lord Viscount Claverton” on the cover; trembling he took it in his hands, and on opening, found a number of bank notes, which he well knew he had not given his wife, his agitation increased, he felt all the agonies which ingratitude and ill requited love can inflict on a sensible mind.

The faithless conduct of his first lady had opened on him by degrees; she had robbed herself of his esteem, and he was not a man fondly to *love* where he could *not* esteem; before he suspected the fidelity of the *wife*, he ceased to respect the *woman*; but *here* he had treasured every hope of joy;—entirely confiding in principles, he thought invulnerable, in innocence he had made it the business of his existence to adore, in sentiments he fondly believed came spontaneous from a heart devoid of guile; how could he support himself under a conviction, of the guilty depravity of the woman he doated on? his lips turned blue, cold drops of sweat rolled down his forehead, and tears burst

from his eyes, unattended by any of the softening, the soothing sensations which generally accompany them,—her voice, gentle as it always was, roused him, he started at the sound, and rushed out of the room, the pocket book in his hand.

Lady Frances became vociferous in praise of her own discernment, and her sister was obliged to use force, aided by her woman, to get her out of the room, before the Countess entered.

Lady Margaret, uncertain what measures her brother would adopt, tho' clearly convinced of his injuries, made an effort to get a way before she entered the dressing room, but could not.

Lady Castle Howel said, she "believed she had slept very late, but her dreams had been so troublesome she was fatigued instead of refreshed,"---Winifred told her the Earl was there, "where was he gone?"

Lady

Lady Margaret sat pinching the corner of her handkerchief ; but so engrossed was Ellen by her dreams, and unconscious of any cause for her silence,—she did not perceive it.—

Lady Gertrude now entered, without one particle of compassion for her, whom she esteemed to be guilty, and knew to be ruined ; but with a sufficient solicitude about her favourite scheme, to hide all her real feelings, and to affect those which the exigence of the moment might render most politic ; she had, in the short time she had been absent persuaded Lady Frances into the necessity of being quiet, or giving up all hope of an heir.

Lady Castle Howel, with a smile, which the harmony and innocence of her soul could only light up, gave her aunt the salutation of the morning, and her breakfast equipage being before her, desired Winifred to let the Earl know she was up.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

WINIFRED returned, my Lord was gone out, the Countess was surpris'd "what without seeing me?"—Lady Gertrude took a dish of tea, "some extraordinary business, I suppose," continued she,—"but not to speak to me! this is really new, and I feel myself affronted," she had a head-ache, and would pay a few visits, and ride in the park, would Lady Gertrude go?

Lady Gertrude, equally fearful of leaving her by herself, lest any body in the house should drop any thing, or of her going out, where she would be sure to be affronted, said, after some pause, that she believed the Earl was ingrossed by some particular business, which perhaps could not be settled without a journey into the country, and in *that* case,

as they should be hurried, it would be best to stay at home.

The Countess acquiesced—she hoped the business was not of a nature to vex the Earl, and as to the journey into the country she should rejoice at that;—her harp was brought, she played, and sung; Lady Gertrude liked music, and Lady Castle Howel's voice was harmony itself; imperceptibly, and undesignedly, she soothed even the rugged heart of Lady Gertrude, who, while she was warbling a plaintive sonnet, could not help feeling some concern for the fallen state of so charming a creature.—When she ended her song, as if fate was inspiring her with a presentiment of what was to happen, and as if she knew how important it would be to her to make a friend, she began speaking of her situation, and declared her resolution to suckle her own infant,—a subject so grateful to the person to whom it was addressed, added to her cordial temper of mind for the moment, her eyes, “unused to the melting

ing mood," was furcharged with a *stranger*,—a *tear* actually stood on her cheek.

Lady Castle Howel saw it—and unable otherways to account for so new an exhibition, concluded her Lord was ill; the fright and agony this fear threw her into is not to be conceived; it was in vain Lady Gertrude assured her he was well, or that she called Lady Margaret to witness it; "where was he? why did she not see him? why would they not send to him?" tears, hysterics, and at length faintings succeeded.

As the day passed, and no tidings of the Earl, the Ladies were themselves alarmed; night came, horrible was the darkness and suspense it brought, no creature in the house went to rest; Lady Castle Howel's senses became disordered, she was in a burning fever, and by day light the next morning, quite delirious.—

Messengers were dispatched every way that could be thought of, and Dr. Macshean
greatly

greatly recommended himself to the Ladies, by the share he took in their misfortunes.

On the third day of the Countess's illness, which was every moment expected to occasion the entire destruction of the family hope, ---two packets were left at the house, one a blank cover addressed to the Countess, in which was inclosed the pocket book, the other to Lady Margaret, with a letter of attorney properly executed, and a short note to his aunts, requesting them to pay every humane attention to the unhappy woman, who bore his name, till after her delivery; when if Lady Margaret considered her unworthy future personal protection, one thousand pounds a year should be paid to her order, provided she resigned the infant to *his relations*; said he had taken a step that might appear unaccountable to them, with a hope, and it was a unique one, of weaning his heart from remembrances that distracted him; when that was effected, he should go to Castle Howel, he desired his
sister

sister to write occasionally, but strictly forbade her even to mention his wife.

Ellen's good constitution, contrary to expectation, and almost hope, aided her recovery, without the dreaded effect, and she was restored to sensations something less poignant, tho' painful in the extreme; Lord Castle Howel's absence was still unaccounted for, in a way that could satisfy her, she could not doubt his being alive, of this she was assured from all quarters, and the whole family with their domestics proved it, as there was no mourning worn,---but if he was gone abroad,—on business of importance to himself, that which was of consequence to the husband, could not but be interesting to the wife, and even if it were necessary to conceal it from her, out of kindness, how little did such precaution agree with his total neglect of her! Not a line, not even a message had she received; she wearied herself and all about her with conjectures: Winifred was suffered to attend, on condition only of not entering
on

on a subject, now become the common topic of conversation, even among the servants: Joseph was forbid the house, and no letters taken in but what were carried to the ladies for inspection.

So entirely was Lady Castle Howel taken up with her situation, and suspense, it had not occurred to her since her illness, that there were in the world beings of any importance but her Lord; she, who in the midst of gaiety and dissipation wrote once a week to Code Gwyn, had now been near a month without recollecting there was such a place in existence.

Ill news flies swifter than a carrier Pigeon, the rumours spread in the neighbourhood of Castle Howel, and from thence to Code Gwyn were shocking.

Lady Meredith, who knew the heart she had formed, treated them at first with contempt; but when post day came, and the next,

next, and the next, without a line from Ellen; when the orders at the Castle proved the Earl's absence; when she heard from the housekeeper, that Lady Margaret's commands were positive from *herself*, without the form assumed since the Earl's marriage, "as your Lady desires," &c. &c. dismay seized the whole family, and days now passed without admitting the light of the sun into the best apartments.

Young Evelyn had taken on him the clerical habit, and accepted a cure in a distant part of England: Mr. Meredith thus deprived of his beloved companion resided wholly at Code Gwyn, and attended the duty of his church from thence.

The honor of his family, impeached in the character of that branch of it, so dear, and so distinguished, tinged his cheek with shame; and the misery, which is the sure consequence of a breach of the moral duties of society, and which, if guilty, must be the
lot

lot of the unhappy Ellen, filled his sympathizing heart with anguish; hours did the miserable family pass, in regrets that they had suffered so amiable, so dutiful, so affectionate a creature to sacrifice herself for them; for *now*, all the splendid allurements of her marriage had lost their brilliancy.

“Oh!” said the old Baronet, “how happy had I been now in your little parsonage, with all my children about me, before dishonor had blasted my name, with my age’s comfort blooming as a cherub in my bosom.”

“We had but a little while to live,” joined Lady Meredith, bathed in tears, “that little might have been passed in peace; we have not more *now* to leave our children, than we should have had *then*, and Ellen, dear unhappy Ellen! Oh, my child! my child, comfort was in her looks, alas she may now want comfort herself.”——

“She who was the fount of innocence” said Catherine, “who never breathed a sentiment
that

that would disgrace the brightest heroine of antiquity."

Miss Mary wept.—

Agnes declared the house had been a desert, since Ellen was made a Countess.

"Not even in her infancy," continued Lady Meredith, "was she subject to the faults common in other children, I never knew her tell a wilful untruth, or be guilty of an act of disobedience."

"Disobedience! my love," said Sir Arthur "it was the pleasure of her life, to render *ours happy*, obedience was nature in her, Oh that I never had parted with her."

"What may be her sufferings, friendless and unprotected."—

"But why is she unprotected?" said Mr. Meredith,

Meredith, with spirit; "if she is innocent she."—

"I will venture my soul on her innocence," replied Catherine, rising, "and if I were a man."—

"I will be that man," eagerly interrupted Mr. Meredith, "I condemn myself for wasting so much time in unavailing sorrow and conjecture, even if she is guilty."—

"Oh! my dear son," cried Lady Meredith in an agony of grief, "do not even *suppose* it; Ellen, my gentle, kind, affectionate Ellen! the orphan child of my Arthur, his living picture! Oh, no, it cannot, cannot be.

Yet the depravity of the age of which we are happily ignorant, the luxury, the dissipation, all fascinating, all potent to so young a mind, —then the *integrity*, the *honor* of the Earl. Mr. Meredith sighed as he made these observations.—

"If

“If you wish me to live, to exist,” answered Lady Meredith, “think of Ellen as I do; could a few short months do away a life of innocent rectitude? could the mild, the benevolent principles of christianity, taught by you, with such care and attention? could the honorable lessons she has imbibed from the lips of her grandfather? could the example, the precepts of all our inoffensive lives; could not all these support her in the practice of virtue, even though opposed by a torrent of vice? Mr. Meredith had no wish to oppose these sanguine hopes of his mother, his prayer was, they might be realized; he proposed setting off to London, to see, and know her real situation, as soon as a substitute for his church duty could be found; and he arrived just as Ellen was recovered sufficiently to think of airing in the park.—

Her intention to go out was violently opposed by the Ladies of the family.

Ellen was astonished ; what, “ not to air ! not to call on her particular friend ! but a-propos of friends, bring the porters list,—astonished, as she had been, two minutes before, it now increased, not a single name had been left ; “ what does all this mean ? ” asked she with great anxiety ;—“ has not Mrs. Morley been here, nor Caroline Holt nor the Wilmers ? nor ”——

“ *Nobody*, so that you see, Ma’am,” said Lady Margaret drily, “ you have no visits to return.”

There was something in Lady Margaret’s manner which spoke *more* than her words.—

“ Well,” answered Ellen, spiritedly, “ as I see there is a mystery I am not to develop, and as you say, *Ma’am*, I have no visits to return, I will at least breathe the fresh air,” and she rang for her carriage, when in bounced Winifred, regardless of the haughty and imperious constraint, insisted on by the

maiden Ladies, who, since the Earl's departure, had governed her with a rod of iron.

"As Cot shall be coot unto me, my Lady, he is come, he is come, to save and defend us from the hands of the Phillistines; Oh Lort," she cried, throwing herself at her Lady's feet in a fit of devotion, plect and praist be thy name, for efer and efer,—“my prayers are heart, he is come, he is come.”

“Where, where?” cried Ellen, darting to the door, in expectation of her Lord.—

The Ladies were enraged at Winifred's rebellion, “who is come? who? were you not commanded not to mention any thing that happened out of your Lady's apartment?”

“Oh the Cot of heaven forbit, I should not tell my poor Lady, she will be deliveret out of the paws of Satan;” at this moment they saw Ellen fainting in the arms of her uncle, and Winifred, instead of attending to his repeated call for water, crying,
and

and clinging round his knees ;—the Countess had not doubted, but the step she heard, rapidly advancing up the stairs was her Lord's, her heart palpitated with joy, and unable to proceed further then her dressing room door, she waited with expanded arms, and expecting heart, to receive him ; at sight of her uncle, she was seized with a mixture of joy and disappointment, she trembled, and turned away, but in a moment recovered to a sense of duty and affection, and throwing herself in his arms, was asking after her venerable parents, when perceiving he also had an ashy cheek, that his eyes were suffused with tears, it directly struck her that one or other of the beings she most loved and revered were no more, the idea sunk in her heart, and she dropped lifeless on her uncle's bosom.

The old Ladies were as usual in terror, they blamed Mr. Meredith, scolded Winifred, and were as busy about Ellen, as the respective postures of himself and her,

with Winifred kneeling, and clasping her arms round both, would permit; Ellen was conveyed to a sofa, and before her recovery, Mr. Meredith understood it was the Ladies wish he should speak to her only on the welfare of the Code Gwyn family, till he received further instructions from them.

The weakness, and lassitude, which the late severe indisposition had left on our heroine, was increased by the event of this morning; life could with difficulty be kept in her, while Mr. Meredith was answering her fond and anxious inquiries after his father and mother; one by one she made him inform her of the welfare of his sisters, and then finding herself much exhausted, was persuaded to lay on her bed—and Winifred, spite of her tears, entreaties, and promise to obey orders, commanded to retire.

Lady Gertrude continued with her, and Mr. Meredith withdrew to hear the history of his niece's dishonor, from two women de-

void of candour, and deaf to the small still voice of female charity.

The dissipation, extravagance, and thoughtless turn of the young Countess were exaggerated; the tenderness, indulgence, and an unlimited confidence of her husband, adduced in aggravation of all her faults; with the history of the gaming incident, and the money given her by Lady Gertrude, for the express purpose of paying debts, still owing; then came the finale of the duel, with all its criminal, and corroborating train of circumstances.

A thunder bolt could not have more stunned the simple welch parson; such a series of iniquitous imprudence, to be practised by such a novice, was carrying human depravity beyond what he had conceived to be in nature; again, and again, he asked, and again, and again, was indulged with the heart wounding recital.—Dr. Macshean was announced, he confirmed every title of the story, as far as facts went, but though

Lady Margaret had, in a language he perfectly understood, convinced him, there were unanswerable reasons, why the Earl should remain in his present opinion of his Lady,—he had not the heart to confirm any part of the inferences respecting Lord Claverton, who still languished, with *very* faint hopes of recovery, ignorant of the consequences of his universal gallantry, he had once expressed his hope that the duel would not injure the honor, or peace, of the Countess, and had inquired about her with much solicitude; but the Doctor forbore to hint at her situation, from apprehension of the ill effects it might have on him: That his Lordship was a passionate lover, was a secret he had long been master of, but that he was (as inferred by the world) a *successful* one, was by no means clear to him; but tho' he did not *confirm*, neither did he *deny*, the facts laid down by the Ladies, and Mr. Meredith left the house, with a heart too full for utterance, tho' pressed to dine and make his home in Grosvenor Street.

Unmind-

Unmindful where he was going, he walked at a great pace, revolving on the black tale he had heard, at length, tired of his thoughts, his walk, and the world, he entered a Coffee-house near Charing-cross, and called for tea.—

The hour was now five; a paper lay before him, the first paragraph he read was,

“ A certain beautiful Cambrian Countess,
“ is recovered from her indisposition, without any *very* fatal consequences; a divorce
“ will immediately take place, when the
“ frail fair, is expected to abandon her chere
“ amie, Lord C—n, and march under the
“ banner of a noble soldier.”—

Captain Durell happened to sit in the next seat, and read the same paragraph in another paper, with great volubility, to an elderly gentleman; no man in fact could be so well qualified for a public reading of the

said paragraph, as he was the fabricator of it himself.

“Do you think Lord Charles will marry her?” said the elderly gentleman.

“Marry,” replied the Captain, “for a little while, perhaps; no, no, my friend, Lord Charles is not to be so taken in I have a letter from him in my pocket, which explains his sentiments pretty clearly on that head.”

Meredith’s welch blood was boiling, he could no longer contain himself; “give *me* that letter, sir,” and his eyes flashed fire.—

“Sir!” exclaimed the Captain.—

“I ask your pardon, sir, but it is of importance for me to see the letter, you say you have from Lord Charles Dash, relative to”——here fortunately his emotion was too strong for speech, he attempted to finish, but the effort died on his parched tongue.

The

The Captain eyed him from top to toe, turned on his heel, whistled an italian air, and left the coffee-room.—

Meredith arose to follow him, but the tremor of his soul shook every limb, and he resumed his seat almost breathless.

The gentleman who had been speaking to the Captain, now with great apparent good humour addressed him.

“The Captain is very profuse in his communications; Lord Charles has an excellent confidante.—Meredith groaned.

“You know the Lady perhaps,”---a deeper groan---

“She is very handsome, but her affair with Claverton was known before that old fool, Castle Howel married her---he is ruined, they say,” a third groan.

“Her extravagance was without bounds, I have known her lose thousands at a sitting. Have you any letters for me waiter?”

H 5

“None,

"None, sir," "very hard that;" turning to Mr. Meredith, he continued, "These fine women give a man a damned deal of trouble, but if one gets them at last, the *trouble* you know, sir (winking) is amply repaid."

Meredith, for the first time, felt a sovereign contempt for the folly of the sex, who could sacrifice to the vice or vanity of so despicable a being, he arose and was leaving the house, when he heard the veteran say to another gentleman,

"Poor fellow, some relation of Lady Castle Howel's I am sure, she is like him, devilish fine creature, do you know her?"

The person answered "he had not the honor."

"Damned extravagant, should have had her myself else." —

Meredith's

Meredith's first impulse was to return and chastise the folly, as well as wickedness, of the hoary braggard, but a moment's reflection, and a recollection of his sacred function, soothed him into the patient bearing of an evil, for which, in its present state, he saw no remedy.

Blasted in her character, abandoned by her husband, what hope of happiness or peace to her, in a world where she was despised? What hope of salvation to the soul, where once every virtue lived, but from a seclusion from the vanities that had undone her.—

He came to London intent on vindicating her innocence, of clearing her fame, but the facts were too glaring to doubt or disprove, "Unhappy girl!" he exclaimed, as he touched the knocker of Lord Castle Howel's door, "how shall I carry thy shame to the hearts of my parents,? yet there it must be buried.

He was admitted to the eating room, the family were at dinner, he was invited to join them, but his heart was too full to think of eating, he declined the invitation, and retired to an adjoining room.

Winifred, who had not ceased watching the door, from the time he went out, now came in on tiptoe, her eyes swollen, and in evident fear of interruption.

"Cot pless our dear reverent," sobbed she, bathing his hand with tears, "for the lose of Cot take us with you to Code Gwyn, let us co from the tribe of faro, Oh! my tear Lady."—

"Ay, Winifred, your Lady and you have made a sad hand of it,—you have acted very unwisely."

"Yes, indeed, Cot help us, we have brought our pigs to a fine market; there's Mr. Joseph's poor Lort is dying, Oh!" (weeping) "if my Lady knew it she would preak her heart."

"In-

“ Indeed !”

“ Yes, inteet, and here’s our Lord gone away Cot knows where, and there’s the two crois ould tivals,—and Lady Margaret, and Dr. Macfhean, fuch a crew—and to be fure I muft not fay my foul’s my own; no more it is, inteet, nor *pody* neither, Cot help us, and fend us back to Code Gwyn; Cot he knows I had rather knit and fpin all day, than live here in this cumbuftion, and aſto my Lady ’tis no kindnefs to her, that keeps her here. Lady Margaret fays, and Cot knows ſhe is as *pad* as the beſt, ſo ſhe need not give her pribbles and prabbles; ſhe had better mind how the *Doctor* gets in and out of her chamber, but Cot help us ſarvants, we muft hear and ſee, and fay nothing.”—

“ But what does Lady Margaret fay ?”

“ Cot rother, a naſty painted old belzibub, ſhe fays as my Lady ſhall put off her Ladyſhip, and troop to her *old* hole at
Code

Code Gwyn, because, as why, 'tis the fittest place, as soon as she has brought to bed, if the child (pray Cot bless the baby) is a girl, and take her brat with her, and if (by crace of Cot) the dear baby, is a Lord; why then the old ones are to carry him away, and so part mother and child."—

"And did you hear Lady Margaret say all this?"

"That I did, and I'll take my affidavit; and beside."—

The dinner party being now broke up, Winifred made her escape, praying that the reverend would take her, and her Lady, "back to Code Gwyn, and leave lords and ladies to go to the tivel."—

Mr. Meredith's family honor, his pride, his affections, were equally wounded in this communication of Winifred's; a moment since he resolved to carry her back, disgraced

disgraced as she was, to her natural home, but in her present interesting situation, and of which till now he was ignorant, how could he do *that*? how answer to the dignity of Castle Howel, to the honor of the Meredith's, for an obscure birth, of the legal representative of a noble, and ancient family? an obscurity that might lay the foundation of future doubts, and rob the innocent of its right,—for whatever were the depravities, of which the Countess was accused, the state of her pregnancy admitted no doubt of the legitimacy of her offspring, and he knew the family were too much interested in the event, to neglect any thing for its welfare and preservation; in *that* welfare and *that* preservation, Ellen's health and peace was now the primary object; there was therefore no room for the interference or protection of her friends, no immediate reason to fear, however attached she might be to her errors, she would in her present situation, relapse into them, or that, if she was so culpably disposed, she could effect it
under

under the guard of the Ladies, whose apparent kindness was also secured by the interest they must take in her well doing;—all these reasons co-operating with the several circumstances that had occurred in the course of the day, and which leaving impressions on his mind, that confirmed the history of Ellen's ill conduct, certainly blunted the fine edge of those tender feelings for her, that had brought him to town, he coincided with the wishes of Lady Gertrude and Lady Frances, that he would leave the Countess and her affairs exactly in the situation in which he found them, till after her accouchment, when they promised, should no change of sentiment in the *Earl* prevent it, she should be delivered to the protection of her own family, with the handsome allowance assigned by him;---this agreement was witnessed by Dr. Macsheat, and guaranteed by Lady Margaret, and as nothing further could now be done in the affair, as Mr. Meredith knew how anxious his father and mother were to hear from him,
and

and as he felt it impossible to write, in terms that would not impeach his veracity, without risking his mother's life, he resolved, to the great satisfaction of the Ladies, to return to Code Gwyn, with the same expedition he had left it. Some shrewd people will liken the journey of Mr. Meredith to the old distich of "The king of France, " with twenty thousand men, went up the hill " —and so came back again," —for say they, what has he done? has he made a single inquiry on behalf of his niece? has he made the smallest attempt to clear her fame, to vindicate her innocence?—No, Mr. Meredith was a plain, sensible and a learned man; he was moreover a christian, in whom there was no guile; he served God, and he loved his fellow creatures; there was, in his opinion, no exigence in the human system that could excuse a falsehood, no motive that could justify one; he was the last to suspect, and the first to forgive an injury, no scheme of present advantage, or future ambition, occupied *his* mind, he took no pains to search
out

out the debasements of the heart, it was always enough for him to recognize its virtues, whether *feigned* or *real*; finding in himself no disposition for detraction, he suspected it not in others; when any flagrant act was pointed out to him, his indignation was warm, he reproved, he punished, but at the first dawn of repentance *he forgot*; had he lived in the great world, his credulity would have been a fine field of amusement to the *witty*, and a prey to the designing,—at Code Gwyn it was neither, his example was so respectfully followed, his precepts so truly attended to, and his simplicity of heart so beloved, that an imposition on *him* would have exposed the perpetrator to general repentment; how then could a man so void of guile himself, doubt a relation so attached to probability, so confirmed by circumstances, and so solemnly witnessed by people of (as far as he knew or believed) as great veracity as himself? and certainly the ladies had no interest in defaming the Countess, nor indeed, excepting a few embellishments, did

did they do it, for they implicitly believed her guilty.

The conversation at the Coffee-house was purely accidental, a Captain in the army ! the confidential friend of a Lord ! could *he* be suspected of falsehood ? and the old gentleman, 'tis true, his folly was the most conspicuous thing about *him*, but he had no apparent end to answer in reviling the Countess, at least none our welch parson could discover. The duel was a fact, Lord Claverton not expected to survive, Lord Charles fled, and the Earl had repudiated his wife ; he had seen the fatal pocket book, which still lay in the jewel case on the toilet, open for any inspection, and having no cause to doubt gave up even the hope, to find her worthy the protection he nevertheless resolved to give her.—

Meanwhile Winifred desperate in resentment of the injuries offered her, and intended to be offered her mistress, and courageous
in

in the certainty they had *one* friend now in the house, clamorously insisted on being suffered to attend her, complaint of her behaviour was brought to the Ladies in the hearing of Mr. Meredith.

Some events at Code Gwyn, in which she had been suspected, recurred to his mind, and a transient suspicion of her integrity, shot across the bosom of candour, it was however *but* transient.

This creature loves her, poor poor Ellen! is it come to this? must she then be deprived of the sight of the *only* one who does; while he thought he pleaded for Winifred, the comfort, and consolation of Ellen, was only in his mind, he entreated she might be suffered to attend her lady.—

The Ladies had strong objections; they argued with passion.

Mr. Meredith would not give up the point, *he* reasoned with humanity.—

They

They adduced the danger of her imprudence, and likelihood she would, by betraying the discovery, defeat all their hopes ; he hinted the natural terrors incident to her situation, the satisfaction it must be to see herself attended by the companion of her infancy, one of whose fidelity she was assured.

Fidelity ! they were surprised at the expression, from a man of his cloth, what could fidelity infer from a servant, to a woman in Lady Castle Howel' situation.

He apologized, and begged to change it for affection.

They were gloomy and dissatisfied.

But tho' the very essence of mildness, in his general conduct, there were points, on which Mr. Meredith was immovable ; he felt there was a degree of tyranny, in depriving Ellen of her chosen servant, and substituting another in her room, not warranted by the Earl's

Earl's orders, and therefore not justifiable in them; and as to think, and speak, was to him one and the same thing; he with equal respect and resolution, remonstrated against so indefensible a measure; the result was, Winifred was ordered in, and restored to her place on condition of secrecy.

"What" cried she "is the reverent then going without us, are we not to go home with you to tear Code Gwyn?"

"*She* might go," Lady Margaret said.

Poor Win's tears were always near, she began to cry and kneel, but Mr. Meredith insisted on her leaving the room.

"If indeed she *wished* to leave her Lady."

Win shook her head and wept aloud.

"There was no objection."

"Ay, ay, I see how it is, satan has set his cloven foot on my poor Lady, and her own

flesh and blood is turned against her, but as for poor Winny Griffiths, she will bag her pread from door to door, and carry the tear little paby on her pack, before she will leave her, and as to you, Mr. reverent, you may be ashamed, with a parcel of ould cats to."——

"Old cats," repeated Lady Gertrude, rising with dignity and resentment.

"Cats!" said Lady Frances, her eyes flashing fire.

"This creature should be turned out of the house," said Lady Margaret to Dr. Macshean.

"Petter not Madam," answered the enraged Winifred, "I shall say a thing or two whenever I am, some folks won't like, so you'd petter let me alone, I care for nobody in the house, but my mistress; and if it was paved with cowld I would not stay a day after her

her, Cot knows I lose her too well to tell her any thing to vex her, and a petter and more firtuous Lady never lived.

The Ladies smiled contemptuously.

“No, nor died neither for all your pad looks, and with the crace of Cot it will come out, and then our reverent will be ashamed to leave us in the jaws of destruction,” so ready to burst with passion, exit Winifred.

The Ladies agreed, nothing could make Lady Castle Howel, partial to so ignorant a creature, but being in her power.

Mr. Meredith modestly adverted to the infant attachment she must have formed, to a girl who had always attended her.

Neither of the three Ladies had any idea of infant attachments.

Wini.

Winifred returned with a message, her Lady was up and requested her uncle would take his tea in her dressing room.—After repeated charges to beware of what he said, he followed Winifred.

Ellen fondly embraced him, and again enquired with anxious tenderness after every part of the family.

Spite of the censure and indignation of his upright heart, he could not see her in her present situation, young, beautiful, far advanced in a state the most endearing, as well as interesting to a husband, who had abandoned her, lost to peace, to fame, and to honor, yet unconscious of the precipice on which she stood, without being extremely moved; he turned his face away, but tears would flow, hers accompanied him, and a silence ensued broken, only by the audible sobs of Winifred, who not having been bid to withdraw, stood behind her Lady's chair.

Lady Castle Howel recovered her serenity before Mr. Meredith resumed the part he was enjoined to act, and with great tenderness said, she had been extremely affected by his agitation when first she saw him, supposing it occasioned by some melancholy event at Code Gwyn; but relying on his assurances, that all were well there, she could now account in a different manner for the distress that seemed to overpower *him*, “you weep my dear uncle, and it is for me, my situation, left by my Lord at a time when”—she hesitated, a crystal drop trembled thro’ the silken lashes of her eyes, “ignorant of his fate, shut out of his confidence, an alien from his heart, a constraint on all my actions, is no doubt affecting to my friends; my Lord they *say* is well, he is under no dreadful misfortune—he has his intellects—is at liberty, *can* write to those who share his confidence,—and these also are permitted to address *him*; what I suffered from my fears for his safety, the righteous God, whom you my dear uncle taught me to fear, can only witness.

Mr.

Mr. Meredith shuddered, he looked at her with abhorrence ; what, thought he, has she then acquired confidence to appeal to her God, with a load of unrepented iniquities on her mind ! he met her eye, his own, armed with the calm severity of an accusing angel, he intended should flash conviction into her guilty soul ; but her steady, undismay'd, yet sorrowful glance, spoke no guilt, no conviction ; on the contrary she construed the severe expression of his naturally serene eye, into resentment for her treatment.

“ I knew you would feel for your Ellen, but who, or whatever has been the cause of my sorrows, I forgive them ; it has awakened me from a lethargy, in which all the blessings heaven so liberally bestowed on me were lost ; I had almost ceased to regret our happy parties at Code Gwyn, and I thought—no I did not *think*, till (deeply sighing) it was too late ; my conduct certainly estranged me from the warm heart of my dear Lord, yet had he but compassion-

ated the youth, the caprice, the weakness of her, he honored with his name ; had he waited but a little."——she paused, while Mr. Meredith, all attention, sat in expectation of a full confession of her guilt, she continued, "but these are vain regrets, and it is my only consolation that my heart is cleared from the guilt of intentionally offending him, that my gratitude, and affection is yet inviolable, and that however faulty I have been, the punishment he has inflicted is unjust and excessive; she stopped, waiting but waiting in vain for Mr. Meredith's answer, he was lost in the perplexity of her speech, to him it appeared mysterious, and equivocal! confession, and justification! in the same moment, and in the latter part false in every particular; if guilty, how could her gratitude and affection be inviolate? or how could she impeach the justice of a punishment so mild, for actions so atrocious?—

Finding he did not answer, she again recurred to the family at Code Gwyn, regretted she

she had ever left it, and anxiously asked if he thought she should be allowed to revisit it.

He believed it was not intended to restrain her, after a certain event, from going where she pleased.

“After ! is my Lord then for ever gone ? will he not return to sustain and comfort me ? what never ! am I never to be forgiven ?

“There are offences, Ellen, which it is not in the power of an honest man to forget, tho’ christian charity may induce him to forgive.”

“You make me tremble, sir, are mine of that black description ? what have I done ? for God’s sake tell me ! uncle,—my heart,—

“Yes, Ellen, *your heart* will inform you.”

She started.

Mr. Meredith arose, he advised her to be composed; said the business being finished which brought him to town, he must immediately return, and embracing her, bid her farewell before she could recover from her consternation.

CHAP. VI.

WINIFRED's sorrows however would have vent, she wrung her hands, and wept aloud, "the reverent was gone; they had no friend to stand by them, they were poor miserable wretches, and Cot know'd whether their lives were in safety."

Ellen stood the picture of despair, she repeated "your heart will inform you." She tra-

traversed her apartment, Winifred still lamenting their hard fate, to be left behind the reverent.

“My *heart*,” said Ellen, looking steadfastly at Winifred, and bursting into tears.

Winifred threw herself on her knees, “for the Lort almighty’s sake, my tear laty, let us co home, what matter the reverent, we shall be as welcome at Code Gwyn as him, and there we can tell our own story, and prove all the lies that has been hatcht.

“And pray my good Winifred,” said Ellen extending her hand, with that cordiality which is sure to flow from a sorrowful heart, when it meets sympathy, “pray what *has* been said? what lies have been told?”

Winifred kissed the white hand thus extended, and forgetting all the old ladies precautions, her own promises, and the consequences of the discovery; stole to the door,

locked it, and beginning from the fatal night at Mrs. Stewart's rout, repeated the story in as many different ways, as she heard it; with however the same conclusions, that Lady Castle Howel intrigued with Lord Claverton, that Lord Charles Dash was in love with her, and had challenged him; that Lord Castle Howel had discovered the intrigue by a book with papers in it he had found, that he was gone abroad, but that he was to be divorced as soon as her lying in was over; to these succeeded a long list of things that were to come to pass, collected from what the servants dropped, and what Win, by dint of industry, could overhear, with here and there a conjecture of her own converted into facts.——

To conceive Lady Castle Howel's agitation the reader must be as innocent and as injured as herself.

Her heart had severely reproached her, for the folly and imprudence of running in
Lord

Lord Charles's debt, because it had exposed her to the insult of his degrading passion, she had also been severely mortified at a retrospect of the last card assembly, where she had not only squandered the money given expressly by Lady Gertrude to pay play debts, but had contracted new ones; but as to the transaction between Lord Claverton, and her, it had never recurred to her thoughts as criminal, nor could she imagine how it could lead to slanders of so shocking a nature; so much had her mind been occupied by the unexpected events that had happened since, she had not once thought of his Lordship's debt, the book with the remainder of the notes she remembered to have laid on her toilet, from thence Winifred removed it to the jewel case; but too ignorant, and let me add, too innocent to enter into every circumstance, as the world had chose to discuss it, instead of sinking under the discovery, as the ladies expected, her soul rose superior to misfortune; conscious of innate integrity, her heart revolted against her Lord!

“He took me, it is true,” said she, “from obscurity, he expanded my mind, and added a polish to the valuable instructions I had from infancy been in the habit of receiving; he brought me into the great world, loaded me with finery, and taught me how much easier it was to be splendid, than happy! he led me into temptation, and deserted me when there!—he left his wife to the injuries and scorn of the pitiless savages, who call themselves well bred; he consigned me to women without hearts, and men without honor!

“Ay, Cot knows,” cried Winifred, “and if it was not for the expected heir.”

Ellen’s colour rose, “I am degraded in the opinion of my venerable grandfather, and his virtuous wife will no longer receive me to her heart!”

“To be sure she will know all, the reverent was never coot at keeping secrets, I warrant the ould tivals will send him home primful.”——

“My

“ My aunts will blush to hear me mentioned !”

“ Ay, I dare say Miss Meredith, is comparing you to all the women with hard names, in her old books.”

“ My uncles think on me with indignation !”

“ Yes inteeet, the reverent for that.”

“ I have nothing left worth preserving, but the innocent burthen I carry !”

“ And that will be taken from you the instant it is porn ; if it is a Lort, the ould ones will have it ; if a Lady, Lady Margaret and the Doctor will.”——

Ellen walked about the room in agitation.

Lady Gertrude rapped at the door.

Winifred said, her Lady would not be disturbed! An answer so rude and unusual alarmed her, she retired to communicate it to her sister and niece, lamenting that she had been prevailed on, to suffer Winifred's attendance.—

Lady Frances having advised the measure, was sure, if any thing had transpired it was from the welch parson.

Lady Gertrude denied that with warmth, she knew he had too much good sense.—

Lady Frances thought him; the greatest fool she ever saw.—

Her sister coolly gave it as her private opinion, that Lady Frances was not a competent judge.

Lady Margaret was just then whispering an important something to the Doctor, so that she did not give her sentiments, but as
neither

neither of the aunts, chose to retract theirs, they waxed both warm and loud! their replies and rejoinders became less and less suitable to their quality, and matters wore a very unpleasant aspect—when one of their women came in to inform them, Lady Castle Howel had ordered the carriage to be at the door at six the next morning, and bid a footman enquire where Mr. Meredith slept.

All animosity now forgot in the common cause, Lady Margaret joined in consultation of what was to be done; the Doctor, it was decreed, should pay the Countess a visit, he sent his name and was admitted.

To his enquiries after her health, she answered decidedly *well*, and withdrew her pulse from his touch.

He observed it was a cold evening, and asked leave to stir the fire.—

She was suffocated with heat, and begged he would not give himself the trouble.

Winifred

Winifred came in with an account of Lord Castle Howel having taken all the horses with him.—

Confirmed by the Doctor.

Ellen directed them to get hired horses.

The Doctor remonstrated against her using hired, or indeed any horses, going out would actually endanger her life, and he concluded his harrangue by hinting, it was the Earl's wish she should not leave her own house.—

“*My house !*” repeated she, indignantly.—

Winifred re-entered and said her uncle left town in an evening coach, as soon as he parted with her.—

Confirmed by the Doctor.

Her countenance, in which a haughty indignation was blended with sorrow, fell at this, she sighed bitterly, and turning to the Doctor, said, whatever constructions might
be

be put on the question she was about to ask him, she would be obliged by his candid answer,—he bowed,—she asked if there had really been a duel between Lord Claverton and Lord Charles Dash.

He bowed affirmatively.

“On my account, sir?”

He bowed again, but doubtfully.

The Countess then courtesy'd, and retired to her closet, and the Doctor joined the Ladies.

All now then was discovered, and delicacy, according to Lady Margaret's opinion, out of the question, it was proper she thought to acquaint her with the power invested in them, and what line of conduct it was expected she should adopt.

Lady Gertrude, still politically apprehensive, wished to use gentle means, but allowed

ed it was improper to suffer her to go abroad, without some part of the family.

“And what part of the family, madam, would undertake so honorable an office,” said Lady Margaret, “as the chaproning such a woman? would you Lady Frances?”

“*Me*,” replied her Ladyship, “no, I am too volatile, Lady Gertrude will not I dare say object to an office, for which her gravity so well qualifies her.”

Lady Gertrude frowned,—“if she should assume spirit enough to insist on going out, I cannot see how we can prevent her.”

Dr. Macsheat presumed, that acting by authority of Lord Castle Howel, she might be legally restrained.—

“Where should she go?” asked Lady Margaret, “she has not a friend in the world! the pride of the Meredith’s will reject her,
the

the people she called *friends* here, would not be seen to speak to her; Morley will never let her in, and Lady Mappleton has sent Caroline to her uncle's at Durham, to prevent her seeing her. Where can she go?"

Where indeed! but the mask had dropped, Winifred no longer fearing the tyrants, who so late made her tremble, was still recollecting and still relating, the many malevolent speeches of the Ladies and their creatures.

The contempt of Ellen's authority in the family, the utter neglect of her Lord, the ruin of her character at Code Gwyn, which was the world to her; were a catalogue of injuries that roused into action every faculty of *her* soul; she recollected her husband's unbounded tenderness, his arguments to dissuade her from a too excessive pursuit of pleasure, and regretted she had not attended to them; her extravagance, which had dissipated what would have rendered whole worthy families happy, filled her with shame, and

and the gentle reproofs she had disregarded aggravated her repentant sorrow; but with all this, as no angel was more free from the impurity of which she was charged, the pride of conscious innocence, and injured honor repelled the momentary humiliation of self reproach, she felt herself falsely accused, condemned and deserted without being heard.

"My Lord has abandoned me," she said, "but I will not desert *myself*," and the next morning entered the breakfast room where the Ladies and Doctor Macsheat were in close confab; the air and manner she was enabled to assume astonished them, they involuntarily rose, and struck by the apparent fortitude of her looks, but in contempt of her character instantly re-seated themselves; Lady Margaret took Ellen's usual place; she felt the affront, and on a servant's answering the bell, ordered a breakfast equipage to be brought to the sofa, where she seated herself.—

The

The two parties finished their morning repast, in gloomy silence, and Ellen ordered her workstand.

Mrs. Morley was announced ; she had figured to herself the poor-guilty degraded Countess, suffered to remain in the house thro' the intercession of the Ladies, only till her accouchment ; judging of what her own feelings would be in such a situation, when having no resources within herself, she should be deserted by the world, and confined to the narrow limits of her own apartments ; she fancied grief would have fed on her beauty, mortification humbled her pride, and shame sunk her to the level of the guilty ; instead of which, with the radiant dignity of conscious innocence on her brow, the pride of insulted honor flushing on her cheek, and the collected consequence of innate gentility, she saw and felt the real Lady of the mansion was in her place.

Among Winifred's numerous communications, she forgot the intimacy that had taken place

place between Mrs. Morley and Lady Margaret; Ellen therefore could not but take this visit to herself, but the frivoloty of mere fashionable attachments had no longer charms for her: Mrs. Morley was her companion, nay her seducer in scenes she blushed to recollect, her thoughtless gaiety amused in the moment, but disgusted in the retrospect, and the absence of friendship and sympathy evinced in her neglect, robbed her of all the regard she had felt for her; she nevertheless, with the good breeding natural to her, arose; Mrs. Morley courtesy'd with an involuntary respect, extorted by the manner of our heroine, she blushed, and her eyes unused to be withdrawn on *any* occasion, sought an object where to rest, free from the piercing glance of the elegant Countess; in Lady Margaret's she found so much, both of information and confidence, that turning short, without speaking, she ran up to her friend, shook hands, and tho' she had aired with her the preceding morning, talked of the age that had elapsed since she saw her, and was immoderately

moderately rejoiced to find she was not tormented with the head-ache, of which she had complained.—

Ellen smiled ; the flow of words, warm professions, the friendly actions that *mean nothing* ! amused without mortifying her ; she had no regrets for such little enjoyments and the less they became in her estimation, the more her thoughts recurred to deprivations of more moment.—She resumed her work.

The opera, concert, play, court dresses, visits, &c. &c. were discussed with exactly the same attention to the Countess, as if she had not been present.

Lady Mappleton was announced.

Lady Margaret coloured, “ we must not receive her here,” and darting an angry glance at Ellen, left the room, followed by Mrs. Morley and the two spinsters.—

Lady

Lady Mappleton was a widow of quality and fashion, a woman of excellent morals, unimpeached character, and sound understanding; she was related by marriage to the Castle Howel's, had been left early in life a widow, with two sons and three charming daughters; Ellen had been introduced to, and well received by her, but not till she had got into a circle of acquaintance, and engagements that prevented her following the bias of her heart, in accepting the advances to friendship and intimacy of Caroline Holt, Lady Mappleton's only unmarried daughter: In the vortex of dissipation in which she was constantly emerged, there was no time to cultivate sentiment with the less dissipated; Miss Holt's card was oftener on her table than that of any other person, and she was always pleased to see her, but it very seldom happened she could pay the attention she felt due to this amiable girl.—

Lady Mappleton was visited by most of the description of nobility, who mingled mind in their connexions; her select parties consisted

list of the most brilliant geniusses of the age, and her musical meetings, where her daughters were performers, considered among the first private concerts; yet Lady Mappleton, and her family, always found leisure for the elegant attachments of the heart; and to these Lady Castle Howel would have been an invited welcome guest, had she been mistress enough of her time to accept it; but Lady Mappleton had too much sense, and experience not to foresee, the ill consequences of Lord Castle Howel's indulgence, and his Lady's thoughtless extravagance; tho' all her penetration, of which she had a great deal, and observation, of which she was not sparing, had never suggested to her, the probability of the Countess's commencing intriguer.—

Miss Holt's partiality for our heroine, was warm from a benignant heart; tho' of a grave turn herself, she loved her vivacity, and (tho' a woman) admired her beauty; she could not bear the shock of hearing in all parties of Ellen's infamy, and therefore prevailed on her
mother

mother to send her to visit an uncle in the north, from thence she wrote to request she would call in Grosvenor-street, to enquire the fate of Lady Castle Howel.

Lady Mappleton, and her family, were the only connexions, which now, awoke from her delirium, Ellen regretted; Miss Holt had been indeed as neglectful of her as Mrs. Morley, and most likely from the same motive, but there was a purity, a modest consistence, in the character of one, that properly censured the imprudence, which the levity of the other authorized; to the censure of strict propriety Ellen bowed; but she despised the vain triumph of accidental character,—she felt acutely the misfortune that deprived her of the honor and comfort of Lady Mappleton's countenance and advice; her proud heart, which repelled with indignation, the affronts of Lord Castle Howel's family, would have melted in the society of a matron, whose goodness of heart, and fine sense, were at once an earnest of candour and
a sym-

a symbol of justice; the former she was sure would not be denied her, and she had no cause to deprecate the latter, she sat ruminating on the good effects of such an interview, and was tempted to go to Lady Mappleton, and in presence of the women she despised, throw herself at the feet of the one she respected, and implore her protection and advice; but while she hesitated, the servants called the carriage, she hastened to the window, her Ladyship at that moment looked up, Ellen's heart sprang to her eyes, she courtesy'd, but had the grief to see,—tho' Lady Mappleton steadily observed her, she did not return the compliment, but drove off, without condescending to notice it;—she turned from the window to give way to her tears, and perceived Lady Margaret at her back, who having seen both the compliment, and Lady Mappleton's neglect of it, who visibly enjoyed the ill natured triumph.—

Whether Lady Margaret had any point to carry in making her desperate, whether any

consequences could be derived of advantage to her from a repetition of the supposed imprudence, which had robbed her young sister-in-law of every blessing in life, will appear in the course of this history; certain it is, had she been as much bent on *driving* her to extremities, as her aunts were in *avoiding* them, she could not have taken more effectual methods, nor have succeeded better.

In Ellen's establishment, a favourite servant of Lord Castle Howel's, was by her own desire, placed as her footman; this man, who was proud of the distinction, and who, by his constant attendance on his lady, was better qualified for the office he assumed than any one of the family, (Winifred only excepted) was her advocate from the garret to the cellar; but as Lady Margaret admitted no doubt herself of Ellen's guilt, it was not to be hoped she would permit a menial servant to give his opinion of the matter, when that opinion so entirely contradicted her's.

Philip

Philip was therefore discharged in disgrace, and forbid to hold acquaintance with any of the servants; of this circumstance Winifred was reminded, by seeing him pass the window, while her Lady was pensively looking out, and Ellen insisted, with great spirit, he should be restored.

Lady Margaret's answer called forth a reply, that reply provoked a rejoinder; and spite of all the efforts of the two spinsters to prevent matters from coming to extremity, it ended, in Lady Margaret's insisting on Ellen's giving up the situation she was so unworthy to fill, and retire to her own apartment, with an humble sense of the lenity shewn her—and then, in her presence, ordered the servants to pay no regard to any commands, she might have the temerity to give them.

Winifred unfortunately snapping her fingers at this, and saying, “the servants, Cot almighty be plest and praisht noes petter how to sarve Cot, and obey their true and

rightful mistress, was bid to be gone immediately, and the Earl's delegated authority produced to enforce these orders.

Ellen read the letter over, and silently returned it to Lady Margaret, while Winifred raised her voice in vociferous protestations, she would tie on the spot before she would leave her Lady.

Dr. Macsheat entered the room.—

Sorrow, pride and vindictive anger, swelled the bosom of the fair Countess, the tear that anguish forced into her eye, was repelled by scorn; her form was raised and she really looked over them all.

The Doctor's conscience smote him, it reproached him for being, in some degree, an accessory to injuries that might occasion the death of the loveliest woman of the age, and of the heir of a noble family; he had recently left the bedside of his patron, whose
mind

mind-weakened by present, and appalled by future danger, unveiled some secrets to the Doctor, which convinced him, tho' the Countess might be imprudent, she was not guilty.

Winifred, still vociferous, grew louder and louder; the Doctor whispered Lady Margaret, and proved his ascendancy by the effect of that whisper; Win was ordered out of the room, but suffered to remain in her place.

Ellen declined the officious civility of the Doctor, in haughty silence, and withdrew, with a fixed resolution to avoid all further intercourse with every part of the family.

She reached her apartment, with her head, and heart full; the treatment she had received, in the presence of Lady Frances and Lady Gertrude, gave her an earnest of what worse she might have expected, if the situation, on which all the family hopes hung, was not her protection.—To be considered as a convenience, a mere vehicle, to gratify the vanity

and resentment of one part of the family, and the whim and caprice of the other,—till their own ends were answered, and *then* to be spurned from them, and have her child taken from her, for whose fate she already began to feel an interest, was more than the philosophy of eighteen could bear.—

She would write to her grandmamma, openly and explicitly; she would implore the protection of her grandfather, who with her uncle, would resent her ill usage; Ah! but they were in Lord Castle Howel's debt, would his resentment not be excited by their interference? would he not withdraw his friendship? would he not consign them to the merciless stone hearted Morgan? and what end after all would it answer, but expose them to insult and distress; her character was injured on circumstantial evidence only; but what was her simple *no*, to the *yes* of the multitude; if that *no* was not believed; her grandfather would disgrace himself by receiving her, if it was, he might be ruined by opposing *his*
con-

confidence to Lord Castle Howel's prejudices ; "no," said she, "my uncle condemned without hearing me, he has carried his opinions with him to Code Gwyn, my heart is in the eye of God,—and my fate is in his hands, I will quit this house, and never return to it, till my honor is cleared from the injurious imputations cast on it, but I will not involve my friends in my disgrace.

Winifred, her faithful friend and counsellor was present, watching with staring eyes, and distended mouth, every turn of her countenance, the "I will quit this house," was the happiest tidings she could hear, hating every thing in a place, where she had experienced such extreme of good and ill fortune, and where she was, when out of her Lady's presence, exposed to all the second hand airs of the Ladies women, no change in her opinion could be for the worse.

"Cot be plect and praisht! Oh, my poor aunt Griffiths always said, "London was the

rifel's drawing room! when shall we set out? how shall we travel?" and twenty other questions poured from her voluble tongue, and she immediately began to pack up without waiting for the answer, Ellen was indeed little disposed to give.

The provocations she had received, the resentment that glowed in her bosom, and the punishment her absence would inflict on at least some part of the Howel's, solely occupied her.—

Winifred, however, proceeded in packing up the most valuable portables, among which she did not forget the jewel case, which she placed in the midst of a bundle of cloaths without Ellen's observation.

After a silence of some minutes ;

"Where can we go?" said Lady Castle Howel.

"Where

"Where but to Code Gwyn, Cot pless us," answered Winifred, still busy.

The Countess started, "ah no ! Winifred, Code Gwyn ! we cannot go there."

Down dropped the bundle out of Winifred's hands, "not co to Code Gwyn ! why where in the name of Cot almighty shall we co, then ? I am sure if we don't co there we shall be like the tove out of Noah's hark, wandering about without a pit of resting place to put our foots upon."

Ellen felt her desolate condition, but, as she fancied she had, with great coolness and solidity, weighed all the arguments for returning, or not returning, to Code Gwyn, and as the latter had predominated, to free herself from questions, which in her present irritated state of mind, were very vexatious, she told Winifred, with unusual severity, her commands must be obeyed, without inquiries of any sort; on the contrary, if she wish-

ed to go to Code Gwyn, or any where else, she was at liberty.

Winifred's joyful note was in an instant changed, her tears as usual were the prelude to a volley of words, she wanted to go no where, not she, Cot help her, it did not signify what became of her, she would even stay and wait on the ould cats.

Ellen warned her not to give so much licence to her tongue.

Winifred vowed she would never speak again.

"I leave this house, said Ellen, tho' clandestinely, *not* guilty; I shall not want fine clothes, you must therefore prepare things only suitable to a private gentlewoman, mere necessaries, and endeavour to find where Philip is."

Winifred knew, it was at a little shop, kept by a welch woman in the next street, where, when

permitted to go out, she had made a visiting acquaintance.

“I think I may trust him,” said Ellen.

“Trust him ! lost my Lady.”

“Forget my Lady, Winifred, I shall wish to be concealed.”

“As to the matter of that, I wish I could not remember you ever was a Lady. Oh my Cot ! poor dear Mr. Evelyn.”

Ellen's face and neck crimsoned, his name had more than once within the last painful hours died on her own tongue, but she had checked the vagrant thought with her utmost effort, and now, after the momentary thrill of pleasure, the long disused sound raised in her throbbing heart, rebuked Winifred feverly, and solemnly charged her never to offend in that way more.

The girl's own recollections recurred to Evelyn's love for her mistress, and in that moment she thought Mrs. Evelyn, could not have been so unhappy as the Countess of Castle Howel, but her usual promise to do so no more, made her peace; and she went to seek Philip to concert measures for their departure.

Philip was a plain mannered, well meaning welchman, son of a tenant to Sir Arthur Meredith; and though taken very young into Lord Castle Howel's suit, where he was a great favourite, always retained a love and respect for the hereditary landlord of his kin; Ellen was known to be the pride and idol of the Code Gwyn family, before whom Philip, among the rest of the tenantry, had been used to bow; the warmth of his vindication of her in a family, where as the principals admitted her guilt, it was not likely she would find many advocates among the dependants, had cost him his place, but had it also cost him his life, he would have been the same honest champion.

Winifred soon found her old fellow servant, with whom indeed she had, in disobedience of Lady Margaret's positive commands, held *daily* conference from that of his discharge.

To Philip's great regret he had engaged himself to a gentleman, who was gone to Edinburgh to marry a scotch heiress, and had left him the care of a new carriage, not quite finished which was to convey in the packing trunks the wedding paraphernalia; confidence thus reposed would render his leaving his new master's service a breach of trust, for which he would be answerable to the law, this set Winifred into her old habit of tears and lamentations.

"Lort be coot unto us, poor miserable Laty as my mistress is! what is poor woman's without a man! Cot help them, when they are wandering about without house or home!"

"God forbid, Mrs. Winifred, that should be my Lady's case, why don't she go to Code Gwyn?"

“ Oh Cot help thy foolish head Philip, why our tivel of a reverent, Cot forgive me, has been here and believed all the ould cats said, and,” —

Philip begged, with tears in his eyes, she would say no more, and having considered a little.

“ I cannot leave the trust reposed in me,” continued the honest servant, “ but if as you say my Lady wishes to be concealed from my Lord’s family, and has not resolved where to go, if she would condescend to ride in the carriage any part of the way, I will lose my life before she shall come to harm, and will be ready when she pleases.”

Winifred’s April day countenance cleared up, she protested Philip had the wisdom of Solomon, and even of Mr. Joseph ! who poor tear soul she had not seen in all her troubles ; she would go and advise her Lady to take Philip’s offer, and return as soon as she could escape Lady Margaret, who to be sure, like other

other cats, she believed in her conscious, could see in the dark.

Ellen, whose resolution strengthened every moment, waited her return with great impatience, and immediately accepted the offers of her old servant; Winifred, notwithstanding her Lady's commands, could not bear the thoughts of leaving any of her finery, which, from her own hankering after new clothes, she supposed the old Ladies would seize for their own use, was industrious enough to convey in bundles, most of the wardrobe to Philip's lodging, "they were any where safer than in the hands of the Philistines;" those intended for travelling he packed up by her directions, and all being ready, the carriage waited at the corner of the street. Exactly at eleven which was the family supper hour, and Ellen, eager in the prosecution of a plan, formed and executed under the influence of contending passions, followed her servant to the hall.

As

As Winifred had, within the last two days, many extra occasions to pass the porter, and as she had in view the object of passing him for the last time, she found it convenient to be very civil, and as he, who like many other quality appendages, was better fed than taught, had time to be very gallant to all the maids, and particularly so to Winifred, when his purple face was a little flushed, which was generally the case at this hour; she relying on his amorous advances, went boldly up to the street door, the corpulent gallant waddled after her, in the scuffle he threw down his candle, and the lamp being near exhausted, Lady Castle Howel passed unobserved, while Cerberus took his sop from the lips of Winifred, who very calmly returned down stairs, through the servants hall, up the area and immediately joined her mistress, who was already in the coach, which, as soon as they were seated, drove off.

CHAP. V.

OUR Travellers were hardly off the stones, when two things of great importance to people of common understanding, who begin a journey, but which had not been once thought of by our heroine, gave rise to some uneasy sensations.

“I never travelled but three times before in my life,” said Winifred, “and that was when your ladyship went”—

“No more ladyships, Winifred.”

“Cot pless us, I forgot, but pray what must I call you? *Miss* Ellen won't do.

Our

Our heroine had not thought of the necessity of fixing on a fictitious name, that of Holt was the first that occurred, "Mrs. Holt," and you Winifred must change yours.

Winifred was rejoiced at that, her's had such a welchy vulgar sound she chose to be called Maria.

Ellen had no objection to Maria, but she thought Jenny, as being something in the sound approximating to Winny, better.

Jenny ! Jane ! oh dear that was as bad as her own, she begged it might be Maria, or Charlotte, or Bella, or—

Ellen bid her chuse what she liked.

Winifred liked Maria vastly, and yet some how, she thought Charlotte genteeler, because it was the queen's, and queens knew what was good for themselves, so if her Lady pleased she would be Maria Charlotte.

“ Maria Charlotte !” repeated Ellen, “ do you think I can call you by two names ?”

“ No ; one at a time was enough, and if her ladyship”—

Ellen was quite angry out Winifred, or Maria Charlotte, was too much in alt to be easily let down.

“ I was going,” continued she, “ to say I never moved but three times, and that was from Code Gwyn to Bath and back, and from Code Gwyn to London.”

“ Ah,” said Ellen, “ *that was a removal indeed !*”

I wonder where we shall move next, may be into our craves, but Cot of his mercy forbid we should be buried among strangers.”

If the reader considers the youth and situation of our fair heroine at this period, friendless, and going from her legal home, into a world

world where she was as much a stranger to manners as to men; they will not wonder this grave reflection of her volatile servant gave rise to the most gloomy ideas; to die in the approaching hour of danger was fearful! but to die without one of the dear relatives, in whose hearts she had lived! to be buried among strangers!——“ Ah!” she exclaimed bursting into tears, “ what a fate is mine !”

The idea of being “ buried among strangers,” lowered Winifred’s spirits, notwithstanding her acquisition of Maria Charlotte, and she continued silent, while her Lady’s recollection carried her to another painful subject.

People she knew could not be so much as *buried* without money, of which useful article she had very little, she took out her purse, the whole contents of which was some loose silver.

The same reflection had more opportunely occurred to Winifred in the morning, which

now unavailingly troubled her mistress in the evening ; and she had studied ways and means to prevent so disagreeable an evil, as a light purse at the commencement of a long journey ; for as to her own stock, her propensity to finery always kept that low.

In packing the jewels, she had seen Lord Claverton's pocket book open, with the notes half out, she found their value, and knowing her mistress's situation, without one scruple of conscience, gave a fifty to Philip, from whom she received the change ; and now ostentatiously displayed it to Ellen, who had no more doubt but it was her own saving, than *she* had it was her mistress's absolute property.

Ellen had formed no plan but that of leaving Grosvenor-street, and by concealing herself and the so much desired heir—avenge the insults of the Castle Howel's, till her honor should be cleared ; how, when, or by what means that was to be effected she could not foresee, but as in the sanguine hope of
innocence

innocence, she considered it as an event that *would* certainly happen, *where* she spent the intermediate time was a matter of perfect indifference ; at all events, the carriage and her old faithful servant attending, was an opportunity which seemed to be thrown in her way by providence ; and only anxious to escape, from a bondage she considered as tyrannical as unjust, was too much occupied by resentment to pay any regard to consequences.

At the end of the first stage, Philip appeared at the coach door for directions.

Winifred had considered the matter deeper than her mistress, she had no pride to goad *her* on, no resentments to urge, no affections to interest *her* ; Mr. Joseph indeed was of some little moment, but not enough to divert her from the perillous situation, in which Philip's absence would leave them ; she therefore said, they would go on, this ready answer was not only a relief to herself and her
Lady,

Lady, but to the poor fellow himself, who dreaded leaving them at that hour, so near town, alone and unprotected, and rejoiced to find they were not yet to separate, he ordered horses on, and again mounted the coach box.

This stage was travelled in entire silence; what was next to be done, where to go, and how to support her existence, during, and after an approaching interesting event, were at first pigmies, but now increasing to giants, in Ellen's imagination, and they were in the parlour of the inn, with their little baggage round them, before the silence was broke.

Every blessing of life is enhanced or lessened, every misfortune increased or alleviated by comparison; the inn where they now stopped, would on the first journey from Wales to Bath, have made Winifred eloquent in its praise, but she had since travelled en suite with the Earl of Castle Howel, where an out rider prepared accommodations at the inns, and the domestics, with the landlord
at

at their head, obsequiously waited their arrival.

"What a paltry inn is this," cried she, fretfully to Phillip, who brought in the last packages.

Philip calmly answered, that being a stranger to the road himself, he had left the choice of inns to the driver.

He was a fool for his pains she said; was *this* a place fit for *her* Lady and *her*?

Philip was very sorry it was not better, and anxious to exonerate himself from blame, went to the Landlady, and insisted on a superior apartment.

The Postillion from London, understood he was conveying a new carriage under the care of a servant, and he could not be ignorant that the women he took up in Grosvenor-street were the connexions of that servant; these

these observations he as usual repeated to the next driver, while they were changing at Barnet, who brought it on with him to the next inn; Philip's demand, therefore, to have the best apartment was coolly answered, that it was engaged; but it happened the waiter had carried in a glass of water, and heard Winifred address, "her Ladyship."

There was a certain dignity inseparable from the manners of Lady Castle Howel, that confirmed the idea of her quality, which being carried to the landlady, immediately procured the *engaged* apartment for the accommodation of the mistress, who did not give the change a thought, to the great satisfaction of the maid, who thought of nothing else.

Winifred, whose pride suffered at the most trifling omission of the attention and respect she had been lately used to, finding the good effect her Lady's quality had on the people of the inn, forgot the precautions

given her by Ellen, and vauntingly communicated her name and rank ; she had also forgot how incompatible with that rank it was to travel in the present style ; a new cased coach, with one man servant, not her own, on the naked box, a pair of hack horses, and a prating waiting woman, were sorry appendages to a coronet ; and accordingly excited a curiosity at the inn, that added in no small degree to the scandalous chronicle of our heroine's actions.

In the mean time, Ellen began seriously to consult her maid about their future operations ; Winifred was incapable of advising, she recommended it to call Philip, who being a *man*, and a *traveller*, must be *better* informed.

Philip had indeed several times journeyed from Castle Howel to London, and back ; he had also attended his Lord twice to Bath, but his honesty and faithful intentions recommended

mended him much more than his mental qualities, or good travelling information; Philip was however called to the consultation, and took his station behind Ellen's chair.

A dead silence ensued.

Philip waited in a kind of pensive attention for what he supposed would be his parting instructions from a Lady, for whom he felt a mixture of respect and compassion.

"Where," said Lady Castle Howel, "would you advise us?"—the word *advise* died on her lips.

Philip's fingers beat a tattoo on the back of her chair.

"What in the name of Cot, are we to do Philip?" cried Winifred, her eyes fixed on his, interrogatively.

Philip would go to the end of the world with his Lady, if he could do it without betraying his trust ; but as that obliged him to go to Scotland.—

Winifred's eyes extended to their utmost size : "What and leave us ! can't we co too ?"

Winifred's fright suggested to Lady Castle Howel, that if they travelled in the coach as far on the road, as they found it convenient, or till they passed some place she should like to stay at, Philip might go on, deliver up his charge and return to them ; she accordingly proposed, and he, to their mutual joy, accepted her offer ; she saw in this poor fellow an attachment, which desolate as she now was, pleased and comforted her,—they proceeded, journeying to the north, till she found her strength near exhausted, and the rough road to Northallerton, where they slept the third night, having particularly affected her, she with great reluctance told Philip her intention to stop the next day.

With

With this separation in view, both mistress and maid, entered the carriage the next morning, in very low spirits.

"Cot be coot unto us," cried Winifred, "two helpless women alone in a strange country, with not a friend to hold their heads, cot help us, nor a man to stand by us; lort preserve his poor servants," and she looked wishfully thro' the glass at Philip; "as to this country, my Laty, the trees, and fields, and broad rivers,—our high brown mountains in Wales!"—

Ellen sighed.

"Wou'd to Cot of his infinite mercy, we were there, for as to this road, to my mind—

Ellen wept.

Winifred longed to give way to her old habit, from the instant she was out of sight of Grosvenor-street, but the fortitude of her
Lady,

Lady, and fear of offending, restrained her; under the sanction of example, however, it now burst forth, in the most bitter wailings, at their cruel fate, mixed with tenderness for her Lady, and invectives against the stivels of the Castle Howel family, nor indeed did the Earl escape.

Ellen's mind, the seat of delicacy and rectitude; no longer irritated by a treatment wounding to her feelings, nor hurt by the privation of dignity and respect attendant on the character of the Countess of Castle Howel; out of hearing of the sarcastic sneers of Lady Margaret, and the provoking pity and ill acted friendship of the old Ladies, reverted to a bitter reflection to her situation, and a retrospect of all the circumstances that had led to it.

In the hour of dissipation, in the very moment in which she had been betrayed into the embarrassment which induced her to accept Lord Claverton's offered assistance,
her

her heart smote her, and altho' her inexperience of the world, and ignorance of its etiquettes, blinded her to the consequence, there was a something so retrograde to her spirit, and sense of honor in pecuniary obligations, that nothing but the immediate insult from Lord Charles Dash would have prevailed on her to accept it; not that she had the most distant suspicion he could have a latent design in seizing a moment so critical to oblige her.

He had succeeded so well in concealing from every part of Lord Castle Howel's family, his passion for the Countess, that the Earl was always pleased to see him at his house, or in attendance on his Lady; who on her part considered him in the interesting light of an old acquaintance, and one to whom she was obliged; his former passion, so eloquently pleaded by Joseph and Winifred, but so entirely reprobated by her friends, if at all recollected, it was with such a mixture of indifference and incredulity, that it was

not in the texture of a mind, at once so thoughtless and candid, to harbour a sentiment on that account, that could take from the obliging respectful attention he paid the whole family.

With Lady Margaret, it has been observed, he stood in a high degree of favour; and even the incident, that according to public statement, had dishonored her brother, could not deprive a man of *her* partial esteem, who still continued his patronage of Dr. Macsnean.

There, are indeed some ladies in this liberal age, who have such prodigious regard to the virtue of their *own* sex, they will forgive, receive, and often love, a known seducer! while their extreme purity shrinks with indignation and contempt, from the unhappy victim of his art! Lady Margaret was of this discription; she made great allowance for *male* offenders, but abhorred all *female* frailty.

Lad

Lady Castle Howel was entirely clear of a thought that could injure her honor, or her character, if laid open to the world; but now that the pride natural to a young and falsely accused wife, was no longer insulted; that she had taken the step most likely to punish those who had personally offended her; she could not help feeling and lamenting the folly that had led her from *real* into the pursuits of *imaginary* happiness.

When she recollected the distress from which the generosity of her Lord had relieved her family, and the narrowness, not to say poverty, from which he had raised her; when she thought on the splendid sphere in which he had placed her, and remembered how in mere wantonness of folly she had squandered his fortune; how she had disregarded the assertions of a man, whose integrity of soul was conspicuous in every action, and believed those of such a reptile as Mrs. Morley; shame and regret overpowered her; and this shame and regret led to feelings still more painful.

Her character was lost, and she could not but feel, that *this*, a privation of the first importance to woman, stamped also disgrace on a husband, who adored her, who seemed to live but in her sight, who had often in transport vowed the possession of her was a talisman against all temporal evil,—that she endeared to him every other blessing,—that his house was a terrestrial paradise, and she the angel who irradiated it.

And when she reflected that he had torn himself from her arms,—all his comforts changed to bitterness; that he had abandoned his family and his home, unable to meet the one or endure the other; that his extreme sensibility had perhaps impelled him to hide both his shame and sorrow from the world, in some solitude, where they preyed on him with redoubled force; his leaving her, which she at first deemed an act of cruelty, appeared one of mercy.

“Ah!” cried she, “believing me guilty, what hindered him from spurning me from

his house? no, he chose rather to become a wanderer himself.—Oh! my dear Lord, where, where are you? why cannot I throw myself at your feet, to implore pardon of my folly, and to vindicate my innocence; what will become of me?”

“For the love of Cot,” cried Winifred, “let us turn back.”

“Back!” answered Ellen, “to Lady Margaret, to——Oh, never!”—

“No, no, not there; my dear Lady, but to Code Gwyn.”

They were now just within sight of Durham; the sun was setting and left on the beautiful hills which surround this charming neighbourhood, a sombre majesty that render such views particularly charming at the close of day; the scene caught her eye, she involuntarily put her head out of the coach window, a chariot was passing, a voice exclaimed, “heavens! Lady Castle Howel.”

Surprised and disconcerted she hastily drew in, "Who could that be?"

Before Winifred had time to answer, by some mismanagement of the Postillion, the carriage overset.

Winifred had excellent lungs, which she did not fail to make use of on this occasion; Philip was thrown off the box, his collar bone broke, and so bruised he could not move.

Winifred's shrieks, which now finding her Lady did not speak, grew louder and more terrific, either reached the carriage which had passed, or the attention of those within was not withdrawn from Lady Castle Howel, they immediately stopped, two Ladies alighted, who with their servant came to their assistance.

Winifred's head and shoulders were out of the window, crying for help; her Lady was teat.

"Heaven forbid," said the younger Lady, affected almost to fainting.

Winifred's grief was echoed by the surrounding woods.

The elder Lady proposed putting the lifeless body, as it then appeared into the chariot, when a middle aged person in a shabby black coat, sauntered on by the inside of the hedge, he immediately closed a book he was reading, and hastened towards them.

Perhaps there never was seen a more interesting figure than our heroine at this moment; her hat was off, her fine hair, which had not been dressed (as the term is) since she left London, only combed out of the powder, hung in beautiful disorder over her shoulders; her eyes indeed were closed but her long eye lashes, and fine eye brows contrasted to the most beautiful complexion in the world, together with her situation, combined to excite compassion, admiration, and curiosity.

The stranger felt her pulse, and to the great joy of all the little group, declared she was not dead. He took a lancet from his case of instruments.

"It will be sometime, Madam," said he, addressing himself to the elder Lady, "before you can reach Durham; with your leave I will take a little blood from the young lady.

"The lort be prais't for ever and ever," cried Winifred, "you are a Doctor!"

The blood dropped very slow from the orifice.—

"The Lady," said the man in black, "is really in danger. I live not a quarter of a mile up that lane; permit me, madam."—

Mrs. Dean Holt, the Lady in whose way fortune had thus thrown our heroine, replied,
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the accident happening just as her carriage was passing, she had stopped, but the Lady was a stranger to her.

“ Bless me !” cried the Doctor, looking at Miss Holt, who was weeping over Ellen,—but thought he, if she is a stranger, why should I wait for leave ? and he immediately led the way to his own house.

“ Nancy, my dear,” said he to a smart handsome brunette, about his own age, “ get the chintz bed ready.”

“ What for ? who is this ? what has happened ?”

“ Hoot ; do you think I can answer questions, do you see the condition the Lady is in.”

The chintz bed was soon ready.

Dr. Gordon, our benevolent host, was the son of a Scotch manufacturer, who tho' he
got

got his son instructed in the rudiments of a scholastic education, at a small expence, by the clergyman of his own town, found no small difficulty in supporting him at the college of Edinburgh; the young man's application was intense and indiscriminate; it was uncertain, not, what line his father *would*, but what he *could* fix him in, and like many of his countrymen, he attained a smattering of all sciences without being master of any; he knew a little of physic, less of theology and still less of law; yet had a diploma, was ordained and admitted a member of the faculty of advocates, having embraced each of these professions in turn, without attaining a settlement in any, he was imprudent enough to fall in love, and marry clandestinely, the daughter of a very great man, who had fourteen children, without a sixpence of *filler* among them, but who being fifteenth cousin to Sir Hector Mac Burlish, of the North Highlands, did not chuse his daughter should marry the son of a mechanic.

Sir

Sir Hector however gave him a small living, he removed to the highlands, and getting also an appointment to a free school, became at once teacher of the gospel and of the A, B, C; but unfortunately happening to offend a Lord, who was cousin to another Lord, who had married the relation of a great man in the south, he was marked for ruin; a prosecution was commenced against him for observing on a text from scripture, namely, "he that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord; now" said our irreverent reverend, "if that be the case, the Lord above certainly owes *our* Lord nothing."

Those who imagined the Doctor had nothing to apprehend from such an expression, are poor ignorant beings, not enlightened by the practice of some scotch lawyers, who far from that troublesome regard to honor, and the established laws of their country, which distinguish every *society*, whatever effect it may have on individuals, in *our* southern hemisphere, associate themselves in a body, to make black white, and white black, at the
nod

nod of him who has the crumbs to distribute: A prodigious *great* man, who if he had not been a great man would have been a very *filly* one; but who as it was, if not a luminary of the law, to dazzle posterity with his blaze, will be at least remembered as the rushlight of *this* age, and serve like a will-o' the-whisp to warn the *next* of the filth, and quagmires thro' which he has waded; this great man was determined to ruin poor Gordon.

He talked! gods how he talked!

A few old fashioned men, said it was against the law; but the question was not between plaintiff and defendant, it was between the law and the lawyers; the law carried it, but poor Gordon was ruined notwithstanding; he was banished from the milk and honey country, and having tried various means of procuring a subsistence, put off his divinity, by which he would have starved, and took to physick by which he now just managed to live.

C H A P. VI.

BUT the chintz bed waits while we are talking of scotch laws, 'parsons and phyfick.

To this gentleman's care, and to his chintz bed, was the beautiful Lady Castle Howel now obliged for shelter and protection; she received more fright than personal injury from the accident, but was nevertheless sensible of that ready welcome, that always enhances the kind offices of hospitality.

Mr. Gordon mixed up a draught from his medical stores, which as soon as she was laid on the chintz bed, he made her swallow.

The Ladies who had lent their carriage to convey her to Gordon's, anxiously asked, as they

they found he was a medical man, if, refering to her situation, she was in any danger; Gordon answered with the true pyhsicalequivoque, if certain effects followed the accident which might be feared, there probably would be danger, if not, which might be hoped, there possibly would *not*.

Mrs. Holt was a very good, tho' remarkably proud woman, her niece, the amiable Caroline, then on a visit to the Dean her uncle, we have before introduced to the reader; she had been on a short excursion with her aunt, when accident occasioned a meeting with Lady Castle Howel, and a renewal of subjects she had travelled so many miles to avoid.

Any stranger who saw Ellen two months before, the pride of her family, the model of fashion, the rage of admiration, and who saw her *now* without friends, shew, or attendants, except one poor maid, and an accidental footman, would at least have made
a moral

a moral reflection on the vicissitudes of human life.

Caroline Holt did more, she so effectually pleaded the cause of humanity to her aunt, as to prevail on her to stay at Gordon's, till a doctor from Durham could arrive.

The good Lady therefore returned to the chamber where Ellen lay in a restless dose.

Mrs. Holt was exceedingly shocked and embarrassed, at having been witness of the accident, as she did not well know what step to take with respect to the family;—those who judged of this Lady from sight, could form no idea of her disposition, for never was sensibility, good nature, benevolence and piety so entirely disguised by a haughty demeanour, and harsh countenance.

Ellen's story was universally known, and Mrs. Holt held her in all possible contempt; yet she could not hear her groans, and see her

her lovely face distorted by pain, without feeling the most lively compassion, and perhaps some little curiosity to know if she was so very bad as the world reported.

When Ellen was a little composed, and Gordon gone to give his assistance to Philip, she entered into a whispering gossip with Winifred, who had gained great credit by her fortitude while her Lady was in danger; but from her she could not understand any thing more than her own hatred of the Ladies of the Castle Howel family, and her regret they did not go to Code Gwyn; not that Winifred kept any thing back out of prudence, but that she told every thing so indiscriminately, it was hardly possible to discover whether she was ignorant of her Lady's levity, or the Lady innocent of any levity at all; but be it as it would, Mrs. Holt naturally concluded, she among the rest, would be one of the subjects of her future communication, and did not think it absolutely necessary, all the world should know, Dean Holt's

Holt's lady! a Bishop's daughter! was watching by the bed of a frail female; and therefore sharply rebuked Winifred, recommending it to her to be taciturne.

Poor Winifred did not know what taciturne was, she thought she might say any thing to a dear good lady, who was kind to *her* Lady; she expected a plain Mrs. would be proud to know she had the honor to assist a Countess; it could not occur to her there *were* Countesses on whom many a humble woman would look down, much less that her Lady was in that unfortunate predicament.

Dr. Ferguson now arrived; and having acquainted himself with all Gordon had done with respect to Ellen, paid some of his most elaborate compliments to Mrs. Holt, in the course of which he made so many bold advances, to know who and what the patient was, who he perceived to be both young and handsome, that she, ashamed of her own urbanity, abruptly withdrew, under the pretence of laying down till her carriage arrived.